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'As Bad as the Congo?'

British Perceptions of Colonial Rule and Violence in Anglo-German Southern Africa, 1896-1918

Bomholt Nielsen, Mads

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‘As Bad as the Congo’? – British Perceptions of Colonial Rule and Violence in Anglo-German Southern Africa, 1896-1918

Mads Bomholt Nielsen
PhD History
Faculty of Arts & Humanities
King’s College London

Abstract

This thesis examines British perceptions of Anglo-German colonialism in Southern Africa before and after the First World War. During the peace negotiations at Versailles, the British Foreign Office published the Blue Book which exposed Germany's brutal suppression of the 1904-8 Herero and Nama uprising in German Southwest Africa (GSWA) as an abuse of the responsibilities of a colonial power. This was part of a move to allow Britain and her allies to confiscate German colonies all over the globe through showing how Germany was unfit as a trustee of 'backward' nations. The German delegation responded by publishing a White Book which claimed Britain had committed similar atrocities in its colonies – particularly in Southern Rhodesia in the 1890s.

This dissertation examines the entangled histories of British and German colonial violence in the cases of Southern Rhodesia and GSWA. It juxtaposes how the British viewed, and in part collaborated with, German counterinsurgency at the zenith of 'High Imperialism' vs. their position at Versailles. It explores the interests and agendas of British officials. These included the internal security of Southern Rhodesia and the extent of governmental influence, the problem of the Boer diehards who had taken up residence in GSWA, and rivalry with Germany for command of south-central Africa. Situated in this myriad of stakes was the African resistance of the Ndebele and the Herero and Nama which posed both challenges and opportunities for British officials.

Central to the thesis is an exploration of the values and ideas which underpinned British attitudes to colonial violence. It seeks in particular to understand the role of humanitarianism, central to the justification for European rule in Africa since its partition at the Berlin Conference. It examines equally how ideas of race and civilisation shaped how British officials understood both their strategic interests and the legitimate uses of colonial violence in the aftermath of the partition of Africa.

Overall, the dissertation is a contribution to a new history of European imperialism in Africa which keeps in focus, at the same time, the histories of European imperial rivalry and collaboration.

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Abbreviations

Aborigines Protection Society	APS
British Library	BL
British South Africa Company	BSAC
Bundesarchiv, Lichterfelde	BAB
Colonial Office	CO
Congo Reform Movement	CRM
Dominions Office	DO
Foreign Office	FO
German Colonial Society (<i>Deutsche Kolonialgesellschaft</i>)	GCS
German South West Africa	GSWA
London School of Economics and Political Science Library	LSE
The National Archives, UK	TNA
Senate House Library	SHL
South West African People's Organisation	SWAPO
War Office	WO
Zimbabwe African National Union	ZANU
Zimbabwe African People's Union	ZAPU
Zimbabwe African National Union – Patriotic Front	ZANU–PF

Introduction

The [British South Africa] Company has become absolute proprietor of Matabeleland and Mashonaland: the colonists will now cultivate their land without danger, the miners will dig out their gold without hindrance, the shareholders at home will touch large dividend and the influence of Great Britain will become supreme in South Africa. If to attain this object it has been necessary to confiscate the lands of several thousand blacks, to cut down and massacre the native soldiery, these are mere incidents of British Christian Colonial life. There will be a cry in Exeter Hall, there will be a few newspaper articles, and a few pamphlets, and then no more will be thought of it. The wheels of the Juggernaut car of British Christian Civilisation will pass over the lifeless bodies, and the incident will be forgotten.¹

The great aim of German policy in German South West Africa, as regards to the native, is to reduce him to a state of serfdom, and, where he resists, destroy him altogether. The native, to the German, is a baboon and nothing more. The war against the Herero conducted by General Trotha, was one of extermination; hundreds – men, women and children – were driven into desert country, where death from thirst was their end; those left over are now in great locations near Windhuk, where they eke out a miserable existence. With the Hottentots – their treatment is still more barbarous, as the Germans are fully determined to root out that race, lock stock and barrel.²

Before the outbreak of the First World War in 1914, Southern Africa saw several violent revolts against colonial rule. The Ndebele (anglicised as Matabele) rebellion in the British South African Company's (BSAC) territory of Southern Rhodesia in 1896 and the Herero-Nama rebellion and subsequent genocide in German South West Africa (GSWA) in 1904-8 remain two compelling examples of this and form the two case studies around which this thesis is situated. These cases were both important parts of the British and German diplomatic efforts pertaining to the colonial question during the negotiations at Versailles after the First World War. Invited by this connection of the two cases after the war, this thesis investigates how we may, from a British perspective, characterise and understand the nature of the changing perceptions and responses to colonial (mis)rule and violence in Anglo-German Southern Africa around the First World War.

In 1918, the British published a Blue Book report which disclosed the horrors suffered by the Herero and Nama peoples of GSWA at the hands of a cruel German colonial administration. In their unsuccessful attempt to counter this, the Germans published the fittingly named White Book, which suggested that Britain too was guilty of colonial crimes – most evidently in Southern Rhodesia. The focus of the thesis is emphasising British officials' perceptions of these incidents and tracks their development from the advent of colonial expansion into Africa to the end-game of German colonialism at the Versailles treaty in 1919 and the creation of the League of Nations the following year, when GSWA became a

¹ BL: 8154.dd.20.(10.), [Unknown Author], *The Matabele Scandal and its Consequences, etc.* (Cambridge, 1894), 17.

² TNA: FO 367/136: Intelligence Report by Captain H.S.P Simon, 6 March 1909, enclosed in Walter-Hely Hutchinson to the Secretary of State for the Colonies, the Earl of Crewe, [undated], 1.

mandate of the Union of South Africa. As Susan Pedersen has observed, one of the core premises of the new mandates system was that these territories were to be held 'in sacred trust'.³ This resembled the international law concerning colonial rule from the pre-war years, where the Berlin Treaty (1885) in particular laid out the ostensible responsibilities of the colonial powers in governing Africans.⁴ In its Article 6, it stated:

All the Powers exercising sovereign rights or influence in the aforesaid territories [African continent] bind themselves to watch over the preservation of the native tribes, and to care for the improvement of the conditions of their moral and material well-being, and to help in suppressing slavery, and especially the slave trade. They shall, without distinction of creed or nation, protect and favour all religious, scientific or charitable institutions and undertakings created and organised for the above ends, or which aim at instructing the natives and bringing home to them the blessings of civilisation.⁵

The Berlin Treaty serves as a backdrop against which colonial rule could be judged both morally and in terms of international law. At Versailles, it presented a viable opportunity to represent German misrule in GSWA as being in violation hereof and at the same time to promote British imperialism as being morally superior.⁶ Colonial misrule and violence was therefore directly engaged with the British diplomatic agenda after the war. With the two cases serving as reference points at Versailles, it is worth asking first how British officials responded to the 1896 rebellion in Southern Rhodesia and the Herero-Nama war in GSWA when they were unfolding contra their views after the First World War? Second, how may we understand the changing relations between British officials in Whitehall and the two secondary actors – the BSAC and Germany – in the face of colonial wars and cases of maladministration? From these perspectives, the thesis will seek to bring the two cases together to understand not only the ways in which British officials viewed and responded to these incidents, but also how they intersected with other arenas such as diplomatic agendas and imperial policies. Indeed, it will examine how these officials managed reports of violence and misrule in the colonies at different times and in different contexts with varying interests and agendas.

A crucial element of this thesis is the developing field within imperial history concerning colonial violence. This topic has received increasing attention, particularly from scholars concerned with India's colonial history where it has been demonstrated that violence was an

³ Susan Pedersen, *The Guardians: The League of Nations and the Crisis of Empire* (Oxford, 2015), 1-2.

⁴ Wm. Roger Louis, *Germany's Lost Colonies, 1914–1919* (Oxford, 1967), 29.

⁵ TNA: FO 881/5181: General Act of the West African Conference, 26 February 1885, Article 6.

⁶ Reinhart Kössler, 'Sjambok or Cane? Reading the Blue Book', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 30, 3 (2004), 708.

intrinsic part of everyday life.⁷ Naturally, colonial violence differentiated according to context, setting and time, but in colonial Africa, as will be shown, violence was a prevalent feature of colonial rule. Furthermore, although violence in this thesis is mainly seen as physical, it could also be, for instance, psychological or social. As Philip Dwyer and Amanda Nettelbeck have recently argued, colonial violence was not a singular entity or an outcome of a particular event, but rather ‘a historical contingent.’ One crucial factor was the aim of the coloniser in committing violence. For instance, exploitative colonialism, intended to extract resources, sought to subjugate the colonised as a source of labour, whereas settler colonialism sought the expropriation of lands, and potentially extermination of the colonised, to make way for settlers.⁸ In the two cases here, however, these categorisations of colonialism as determinants of the nature of violence are somewhat distorted. Where the aim in Southern Rhodesia in 1896 was to extract the mineral wealth of the colony, the expropriation of Ndebele lands was also evident. Similarly, GSWA was earmarked as a German settler colony, but there were also, as will be discussed, clear indications and voiced ambitions to subjugate the Herero and Nama as forced labourers. These categories should therefore not be considered monolithic: colonial violence was not exclusively part of a specific strategy for the colony in question, but also emerged haphazardly and took forms that did not necessarily reflect a broader strategy or ambition.

Colonial violence, as Mark Condos has observed, was often permitted as exceptional conditions could be created, as it was committed against foes considered to be ‘fanatics’.⁹ In Africa, insurgents could also be seen also as fanatics, but perhaps more commonly as barbarians, which, for the coloniser, rendered a harsh response necessary. In his momentous *Wretched of the Earth* (1961), Frantz Fanon disclosed the nature of colonialism, where violence and the subjugation of the colonised were the norm. According to Fanon, a dehumanisation of ‘the natives’ saw violence as an integral part of maintaining colonial rule, and for the colonised, violence was the only way to challenge the colonial state and its oppression. Consequently, the colonised perceived the coloniser as the embodiment of ‘absolute evil’ and vice versa.¹⁰ Fanon’s views are still fundamental to the developing attention to colonial violence, as it was an integral part of how colonial rule sustained itself and constantly sought hegemony by imposing violent measures. Indeed, the weakness of the colonial state resulted

⁷ See, for instance Jonathan Saha, ‘Histories of Everyday violence in British India’, *History Compass*, 9, 11 (2011).

⁸ Philip Dwyer and Amanda Nettelbeck (eds.), *Violence, Colonialism and Empire in the Modern World* (Forthcoming, London, 2018), 2-4.

⁹ See Mark Condos, ‘Licence to Kill: The Murderous Outrage Act and the Rule of Law in Colonial India, 1867-1925’, *Modern Asian Studies*, 50, 2 (2016).

¹⁰ Frantz Fanon, *Wretched of the Earth* [org. 1961] (London, 2001), 29-33 & 73.

in the imposition of violent measures to remain in control over the much larger African populations.¹¹ Both Southern Rhodesia and GSWA, as will be discussed, were characteristic of weak colonial states. The constant search for hegemony was paired with the dehumanisation of the colonised, where racial views of Africans as inferior constructed a conviction that the coloniser had ‘the right to kill’ if necessary.¹² But as Dominik Schaller has noted in his study of the conduct of German soldiers in GSWA and East Africa, racism alone cannot explain colonial violence. The constant fear of ambush, rumours of mutilations and group dynamics created a psychological framework where the soldiers readily committed atrocious acts of violence.¹³ This was also the case for Southern Rhodesia where the Ndebele rebels struck fear among the British troops, resulting in, as will be shown, in the shooting of chiefs and alleged spies despite this being against established procedures.

This thesis will also explore transcolonial aspects of colonial violence such as collaboration in counter-insurgency and the transfer of practices of colonial violence such as concentration camps. More importantly, by examining how reports of violence were acted on and managed by British officials in changing circumstances, the thesis will examine how colonial violence impacted both diplomatic and imperial agendas and policies. The two cases, as we shall see, both remain examples of the oppressive nature of colonial rule and the violence that came with European expansion in Africa, despite often being seen as minor incidents in ‘the scramble for Africa’.¹⁴ From the perspective of Whitehall, both cases were nothing but ‘small wars’ or ‘uprisings’ fought against rebels and not governments nor resistance groups. The targeting of the civilian population was part of the overall strategy of both Britain and Germany, often intended to remove the substance of the rebels and hinder any future rebellions.¹⁵ Colonial violence was therefore in the context of a war seeking to end an insurgency. Officials did not see these rebellions as great moments of resistance or early beginnings of anticolonial movements or national consciousness, but rather as small incidents of insurgency that should be quelled through excessive violence if necessary. Reinforced by racist dehumanisation, this meant, as Jan-Bart Gewald has observed, that ‘total

¹¹ Fabian Klose, *Human Rights in the Shadow of Colonial Violence: The Wars of Independence in Kenya and Algeria* (Philadelphia, 2013), 92-4.

¹² Klaas van Walraven and Jon Abbink, ‘Rethinking Resistance in African History: An Introduction’ in Jon Abbink, Mirjam de Bruijn, Klaus van Walraven (eds.), *Rethinking Resistance: Revolt and Violence in African History* (Leiden, 2003), 25.

¹³ Dominik Schaller, ‘From Conquest to Genocide: Colonial Rule in German Southwest Africa and German East Africa’ in Dirk Moses (ed.), *Empire, Colony, Genocide: Conquest, Occupation and Subaltern Resistance in World History* (New York, 2008), 311.

¹⁴ See, for instance, Thomas Pakenham, *The Scramble for Africa* (London, 1992).

¹⁵ Dirk Moses, ‘Empire, Colony, Genocide. Keywords and the Philosophy of History’ in Moses (ed.), *Empire, Colony, Genocide*, 27.

subjugation, humiliation, destruction and death was often decided upon by the people in offices 8,000 km away.¹⁶

With only a few exceptions, Southern Rhodesia and GSWA have seldom been compared or studied together. For instance, John Wellington and Benjamin Madley included Southern Rhodesia to contextualise the genocide in GSWA, but it remained a marginal theme in both works.¹⁷ Mark Levene, for instance, brought the 1896 rebellion and the Herero-Nama war together and claimed that the Ndebele (and Shona) war was ‘a significant precursor’ to the war in GSWA. For Levene, the violence committed by the British in Southern Rhodesia was similar to that of the Germans in GSWA, as they both sought the extermination of Africans.¹⁸ In Southern Rhodesia, the British scrupulously used dynamite to blow up caves in which resistance fighters were hiding, but also where women and children had taken refuge from the war. In GSWA, the Germans waged a brutal war in the field and established concentration camps to exploit and arguably exterminate prisoners. It remains important at this stage, however, to note that there is a clear asymmetry in terms of the scale of violence in the two cases. Levene is wrong to consider both as wars of extermination on the same level. For instance, the road to peace was widely different in the two cases. In Southern Rhodesia, peace came after a remarkable deal struck between the Ndebele Indunas and Rhodes, after which the fighting generally ceased. Conversely, in GSWA, the concentration camp policy continued long after the main fighting had ended. Indeed, the rhetoric and practices of extermination, as will be shown, were far more widespread in GSWA than in Southern Rhodesia.

These dissimilarities are important to keep in mind when making broader observations about colonial violence in the two cases. Nevertheless, the response by British officials in both cases shows similar patterns in how potentially harmful and problematic information about violence and misrule was managed, which is at the crux of this thesis. As mentioned, it was colonial violence that was promoted by the Blue Book to advocate the confiscation of Germany’s colonies. Similarly, in the White Book, British colonial violence was the centrepiece in its propagation of ‘the crimson trail of Britain across the world.’¹⁹ This thesis can therefore add to the emerging history of colonial violence by examining the

¹⁶ Jan-Bart Gewald, ‘German Governance in Namibia’, Review of Jürgen Zimmerer, *Deutsche Herrschaft über Afrikaner. Staatlicher Machtanspruch und Wirklichkeit im kolonialen Namibia* (Münster, 2004), *Journal of African History*, 46 (2005), 175.

¹⁷ See John Wellington, *South-West Africa and its Human Issues* (Oxford, 1967) and Benjamin Madley, ‘From Africa to Auschwitz: How German South West Africa Incubated Ideas and Methods Adopted and Developed by the Nazis in Eastern Europe’, *European History Quarterly*, 35, 3 (2005).

¹⁸ Mark Levene, *The Rise of the West and the Coming of Genocide* (London, 2005), 253.

¹⁹ TNA: CO 323/807: Correspondence pertaining to Germany’s White Book, 11 April 1919.

reactions to it from the perspective of British officials in a transnational context as well as in different chronological settings where the diplomatic circumstances were imperative to how such violence and misrule were portrayed.

Although the historiographies of each case will be discussed in depth in designated chapters in each case study, it is worth highlighting the tendencies in the historiography of Southern Rhodesia and GSWA respectively, and examining how these differentiate and converge. Terence Ranger has in many ways been the pioneer of African and in particular Zimbabwean history and his momentous *Revolt in Southern Rhodesia* (1967) has been the benchmark for future publications on the 1896 rebellion and arguably for African history in general.²⁰ Ranger contended, first of all, that the 1896 rebellion came as a unified African response to colonialism and was orchestrated through a spiritual leader, the Molimo, formulating an early formation of national consciousness.²¹ This was later refuted by, amongst others, Julian Cobbing, who saw the 1896 rebellion not as a proto-nationalist uprising, but as the last-ditch attempt by the Ndebele state to regain power.²² Nevertheless, what Ranger termed ‘primary resistance’ – the initial response to colonialism – has in many ways created a connectivity to the later liberation struggles (‘secondary resistance’).²³ Indeed, although Ranger himself rejected the idea that the 1960s and 1970s bush war – the ‘second Chimurenga’ – in Zimbabwe was ‘a return to the values of the society engaged in the 1896 risings’, he did suggest that the African will to control one’s own destiny was fundamental to both occurrences and therefore that the ‘first Chimurenga’ of 1896 was a historic precursor to the second.²⁴

Similarly, in Namibia, the genocide became ‘one of the pillars of anti-colonial propaganda.’ Although they were mainly concerned with the nature of German colonialism in GSWA, Helmut Bley’s *Namibia under German Rule* (1971) and in particular Horst Drechsler’s *Let us Die Fighting* (1980) both became central to the formation of Namibian

²⁰ One historian who was inspired by Ranger and has been one of the most notable scholars of African history is John Iliffe who, for instance, argued for Africans to be considered actors rather than ‘passive objects of colonial rule’. See, for instance, John Iliffe, *Tanganyika under German Rule, 1905-1912* (Cambridge, 1969), 5.

²¹ Terence Ranger, *Revolt in Southern Rhodesia, 1896-97: A Study in African Resistance* (London, 1967), 377-78.

²² Julian Cobbing, ‘The Absent Priesthood: Another Look at the Rhodesian Risings of 1896-1897’, *The Journal of African History*, 18, 1 (1977), 62-3.

²³ See Terence Ranger, ‘Connexions between “Primary Resistance” Movements and Modern Mass Nationalism in East and Central Africa’, Part I & II in *The Journal of African History*, 9, 3 & 4 (1968).

²⁴ Terence Ranger, *Writing Revolt: An Engagement with African Nationalists 1957-67* (Harare, 2013), xi-xiii.

national identity during the struggle for independence from South Africa.²⁵ As observed by Reinhart Kössler, there are therefore ‘commonalities’ in how the histories of primary resistance constructed images of nationalism in both Namibia and Zimbabwe.²⁶ The histories of resistance to the BSAC and Germany respectively, created powerful images of a nation which translated into a rallying call for anticolonial movements such as SWAPO in Namibia and ZANU (and ZAPU) in Zimbabwe.²⁷ As Ian Phimister has noted, patriotic history, characterised by the articulation of loyalty to the liberation movements and governing parties, means that the historical roots of ZANU–PF are the ‘alpha and omega’ in Zimbabwean historiography.²⁸ Therefore, the national identities and political legitimacy of the wars of independence are grounded in images of a past of primary resistance against colonialism and this, Henning Melber observes, is the same pattern in both Zimbabwe and Namibia.²⁹

However, the historiography of GSWA has seen the development of a different tendency, in which a supposed continuity between the Herero-Nama genocide and the Holocaust has become the overshadowing focus. This has seen the revival of a new ‘colonial’ *Sonderweg*, suggesting that German colonialism was uniquely brutal and the genocidal horrors in GSWA were, some argue, nothing short of a precursor to the Holocaust.³⁰ Jeremy Sarkin, for instance, claims that the practices used by the Nazis in the Holocaust were not only inspired by, but were outright developed in GSWA.³¹ This colonial *Sonderweg* represents a return to the history of the German nation state in the colonial world, as continuities of German, not Namibian, history, are observed here. Furthermore, it has meant that the search

²⁵ Jan Bart Gewald, ‘Herero genocide in the twentieth century: Politics and Memory’ in Abbink et al. *Rethinking Resistance*, 294. See also Horst Drechsler, *Let us Die Fighting: The Struggle of the Herero and Nama against German Imperialism, 1884-1915* (London, 1980) and Helmut Bley *Namibia under German Rule* (London, 1971). Both were initially published in German with the titles *Südwestafrika unter deutscher Kolonialherrschaft* and *Kolonialherrschaft und Sozialstruktur in Deutsch-Südwestafrika, 1894-1914* in 1966 and 1968 respectively.

²⁶ Reinhart Kössler, ‘Images of History and the Nation: Namibia and Zimbabwe Compared’, *South African Historical Journal*, 62, 1 (2010), 31-3.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 40-2.

²⁸ Ian Phimister, ‘Narratives of progress: Zimbabwean historiography and the end of history’, *Journal of Contemporary African Studies*, 30, 1 (2012), 28. See also Terence Ranger, ‘Nationalist Historiography, Patriotic History and the History of the Nation: the Struggle over the Past in Zimbabwe’, *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 30, 2 (2004).

²⁹ Henning Melber, “‘Namibia, land of the brave’: Selective memories on war and violence within nation building’ in Abbink et al. *Rethinking Resistance*, 308. Also, Terence Ranger, Jocelyn Alexander and JoAnn McGregor, *Violence and Memory: One Hundred Years in the Dark Forests of Matabeleland* (Oxford, 2000), 254-5.

³⁰ Matt Fitzpatrick, ‘The Pre-History of the Holocaust? The Sonderweg and Historikerstreit Debates and the Abject Colonial Past’, *Central European History*, 41, 3 (2008), 486. There are numerous publications indicative of a new colonial *Sonderweg*. See, for instance, Jürgen Zimmerer, *Von Windhuk nach Auschwitz? Beiträge zum Verhältnis von Kolonialismus und Holocaust* (Münster, 2011) and David Olusoga and Casper W. Erichsen, *The Kaiser’s Holocaust: Germany’s Forgotten Genocide and the Colonial Roots of Nazism* (London, 2010).

³¹ Jeremy Sarkin, *Germany’s Genocide of the Herero- Kaiser Wilhelm II, His General, His Settlers, His Soldiers* (Cape Town, 2010), 20-22.

for the colonial roots of the Holocaust have become the alpha and omega in the historiography of the Herero and Nama rebellion and genocide.

The historiographies of Zimbabwe and Namibia, therefore, show both similarities and dissimilarities, but in both cases colonial violence remains a key theme that is connected to later issues. In Zimbabwe, the 1896 rebellion is connected to the bush war in the 1960s and 1970s and remains central to national identity and the ZANU–PF. In Namibia, the Herero-Nama genocide is similarly connected to the struggle for independence and national identity, but it is also connected to the Holocaust. Incidentally, the colonial pasts of both Namibia and Zimbabwe have recently re-emerged. In January 2017, the Herero and Nama decided to sue the German state and various companies such as Deutsche Bank for their complicity in the genocide.³² At the same time, debates and protests surrounding Cecil Rhodes' legacy in both South Africa and Britain, prompted by the Rhodes Must Fall Campaign, has created a public debate about the memory of Rhodes (and by extension the BSAC) and the British empire. The history and memory of the 1896 Ndebele rebellion and the 1904-8 Herero-Nama genocide, therefore, have seen relatively parallel afterlives both in terms of similar historiographical patterns and the resurfacing of these histories in current political debates on the memories of colonialism.

Instead of making parallels, continuities or causalities – whether to anticolonial liberation movements or to the Holocaust – this thesis draws the cases into a common history of European expansion and colonialism. Through British officials as the central actor, the thesis will bring these cases together through an asymmetrical entangled history. This will be further elaborated upon below, but it means that it does not seek to investigate the entanglements between two states or entities, but rather how two events of disproportionate scales, when approached from a common outset, are connected at different moments and in different contexts. There is therefore not merely entanglement in terms of space, but also time. Indeed, the two cases not only have similar afterlives, but were both crucial components at Versailles where these histories converged and were promoted as exemplary of German and British colonialism.

This thesis is intended as a thorough study of two cases of resistance and colonial wars that deserve the attention of scholars instead of being reduced to marginal incidents in the 'scramble for Africa', or as mere reference points for the anticolonial risings of the 1960s and 1970s or the terrors of the Third Reich. However, the novelty of this thesis lies not only in its original inquiry into these two cases as a contrast to these historiographies of continuity,

³² See <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-38530594> (Last accessed 12 November 2017).

but also in its addressing of the interplay between diplomatic, realpolitik concerns and humanitarian ideologies challenged by reports of misrule and violence. It brings together different approaches to imperial history that have traditionally been separate, and can therefore disclose how a central actor – British officials – engaged in both moral and realist convictions and interests. As will be shown, potential scandals and critique of colonial practices, characterised by violence and excessive racism, were directly engaged with diplomatic action, either posing a threat to realpolitik and foreign policy interests or lending it considerable moral substance. Therefore, managing knowledge and reports on misrule and violence in the colonial world was crucial for British officials. Moreover, by deploying this in a shifting context before and after the First World War, we can furthermore infer what the outbreak of the hostilities in 1914 and the conventional history of Anglo-German rivalry have done to our perception of German colonialism up to the present day.

Methodological Framework

The cases represent two different stories of how British officials responded to and perceived colonial rule and violence. Southern Rhodesia represents an ‘inward’ case, situated within the British imperial sphere, while GSWA is an ‘outward’ case which includes another colonising power – Germany – as a crucial actor. This may reveal how responses to and perceptions of colonial rule and violence interplayed with internal empire-building and control and external foreign relations and dynamics respectively. Consequently, this thesis touches upon many aspects such as comparative approaches, Anglo-German relations and colonial violence; however, it remains clear that this thesis does not fall neatly into an existing historiography concerned with a particular field within imperial history.

Given that the thesis is built around two case studies, it is first important to ascertain the comparative elements that are relevant. Comparative history demands certain carefully selected aspects to be in common between the entities that are being compared.³³ Furthermore, it necessitates the selection of a transferable ‘object’ that is present in both entities – in other words, *what* is being compared.³⁴ Roughly based on this, in this thesis the two entities are therefore company and German colonial rule and violence in Southern Rhodesia and GSWA respectively, and the ‘object’ being compared is the perception and response of British officials in Whitehall. According to Reo Matsuzaki, colonies can be

³³ Daniel Little, ‘Eurasian Historical Comparisons: Conceptual Issues in Comparative Historical Inquiry’, *Social Science History*, 32, 2 (2008), 234-41.

³⁴ Erich Angermann, ‘Challenges of Ambiguity Doing Comparative History’, *German Historical Institute, Washington D.C., Annual Lecture Series*, 3 (New York, 1991), 4-5.

‘systematically compared, if comparisons are structured around common sets of mechanisms that similarly regulate the behaviour of actors across cases.’³⁵ However, this thesis does not strictly follow a conventional comparative approach where the similarities and dissimilarities between German and British colonialism are elucidated. Rather, it analyses the perceptions and responses of a selected, yet common actor on two separate cases that represent comparative historical circumstances of ‘native rebellions’. Naturally, comparative history has its shortcomings. Not only is there the problem concerning the significant quantities of sources, but there is also the reliance on specialised literature on the selected entities. In this thesis, the specialist literature is especially on German and British colonialism, which are two separated historiographies that need to be conjoined.

There are, as has already been mentioned, clear dissimilarities between the two cases. First and foremost, the rising in GSWA lasted longer and was of a much larger scale than the Ndebele rebellion. Censuses and estimations of the Ndebele and Shona populations from the time are extremely unreliable. Julian Cobbing notes that one estimate from 1895 listed the Ndebele population to be approximately 46,000 and a census from 1897-98 estimated it to be around 120,000. The latter remains most trustworthy, but does not give any estimation as to how many perished in the 1896 rebellion.³⁶ Furthermore, any estimation may be unclear, as it would undoubtedly be problematized by recurring famines in the 1890s.³⁷ Although also unreliable, the Herero and Nama, according to the Blue Book, had populations of approximately 80,000 and 20,000 respectively prior to 1904.³⁸ The conflicts in Southern Rhodesia and GSWA, however, were remarkably different when it came to their magnitude. In Southern Rhodesia a rather questionable estimate suggests that more than 9,000 Ndebele and Shona were killed between 1896 and 1897.³⁹ In GSWA, estimations of how many were killed are also unreliable and vary immensely, but are substantially higher, as it is believed that the Herero and Nama populations were decimated by approximately 80% and 50% respectively.⁴⁰

³⁵ Reo Matsuzaki, ‘Placing the Colonial State in the Middle: The Comparative Method and the study of Empires’, *Comparativ*, 19 (2009), 119.

³⁶ Julian Cobbing, ‘The Ndebele under the Khumalos, 1820-1896’ (University of Lancaster, D. Phil Thesis, 1976), 466-7.

³⁷ See John Iliffe, *Famine in Zimbabwe, 1890-1960* (Harare, 1990).

³⁸ Administrator’s Office, Windhuk: ‘Report on the Natives of South-West Africa and their treatment by Germany’ (London, 1918), in Jeremy Silvester and Jan-Bart Gewald, *Words Cannot Be Found. German Colonial Rule in Namibia: An Annotated Reprint of the 1918 Blue Book* (Leiden, 2003), 61-2.

³⁹ Timothy Parsons, *The British Imperial Century, 1814-1914: A World History Perspective* (Lanham MD, 2003), 87

⁴⁰ Casper W. Erichsen, *“The Angel of Death Has Descended Violently Among Them” Concentration Camps and Prisoners-of-War in Namibia, 1904-1908* (Leiden, 2005), 1-2.

The two cases are also separated by the practices employed by the Europeans. Although the practices of violence employed by the British were indeed brutal, they were very different from the conduct of the Germans in GSWA where concentration camps were established and outright orders of extermination were issued. Where the war in Southern Rhodesia was perhaps more a war of brutal subjugation, the war in GSWA is generally claimed to have been one of extermination. Additionally, GSWA was intended to be built around agriculture and earmarked as Germany's 'white dominion', equivalent to Australia or Canada.⁴¹ Southern Rhodesia, however, was colonised by the BSAC with the purpose of extracting its supposed mineral wealth.⁴² This meant a different type of colonisation and subjugation of the indigenous communities. As mentioned, the violence that came with each type should not be seen as monolithic, but ostensibly, in GSWA the Africans were an 'obstacle' to the creation of a settler colony, whereas in Southern Rhodesia they were a source of labour for the mines. Despite these clear dissimilarities, however, certain parallels do exist on a more structural level. For instance, both cases reveal the inherent weakness of the colonial state in its continuous attempt to establish hegemony, as has already been mentioned.⁴³ More importantly, the way in which British officials in London managed reports of colonial maladministration and violence that was in clear violation of established principles and international law also saw a similar pattern. In both cases, information about excesses and atrocities was frequently sent back to Whitehall but was always managed in accordance with official interests, depending on which policy was being pursued towards the BSAC or Germany. However, with the dissimilarities outweighing the similarities, why – or rather how – can these two cases be brought together? Although the inclusion of two case studies necessitates some level of comparison, this cannot be the main approach, since these cases are simply too different and are of such disproportionate scales. Yet, the comparative element will enable the thesis to contextualise the practices and perceptions of colonial rule and violence. What we can infer from these cases, however, is what this thesis is concerned with: a study of how a central actor reacted to these events in different circumstances.

The approach of this thesis is in many ways shaped by transnational and especially entangled history. Transnational history questions the defined borders and limitations that have been put onto the historical past from present-day national borders by focusing on a range of

⁴¹ See Daniel Steinbach, 'Carved out of Nature. Identity and Environment in German Colonial Africa' in Christine Folke Ax, Niels Brimnes, Niklas Thode Jensen and Karen Oslund (eds.), *Cultivating the Colonies. Colonial States and the Environmental Legacies* (Athens OH, 2011).

⁴² See Ian Phimister, 'Rhodes, Rhodesia and the Rand', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 1, 1 (1974).

⁴³ See conclusion for further discussion.

connections and entanglements that transcend politically bounded territories.⁴⁴ It has been particularly useful as a tool to understand colonial and imperial history, as empires and colonies were themselves transnational by nature.⁴⁵ The subjugation of indigenous populations and the colonial borders drawn in Europe meant that the colonies were home to many different ‘nations’, whether local or European. This is particularly important in Southern Africa, as the region consisted of many different European groups besides its many African communities. Furthermore, in this thesis, transnational history is important, since the colonial world has mostly been considered separate and disconnected, where rivalry has obscured the more hidden patterns of inter-colonial collaboration. Indeed, the years prior to the First World War are generally conceived as being steeped in Anglo-German antagonism, with incidents such as the Kruger Telegram in 1896 or the naval race being indicative of an increasing estrangement.⁴⁶ Consequently, imperial history has seen the invocation of nationally deduced colonial borders of German, British or French spheres as relatively autonomous extensions of European nation states.⁴⁷ In fact, the traditional approach to the European empires, including studies examining two or more, tends to reflect national empires.⁴⁸

In their series on *The Rulers of Africa* (1977 & 1979), Lewis Gann and Peter Duignan approached both British and German colonialism in Africa through what they termed ‘parallel’ studies.⁴⁹ One of their central arguments is that factors such as a desire for more geopolitical security, a search for glory, the civilising mission and especially nationalism were equal in importance to economic factors in instigating actors to effectuate imperialism.⁵⁰ However, Gann and Duignan’s rigid division of the British and German spheres obscures the entanglements and connections across the colonial border. Instead, the colonies of the region were intensely entangled, as the colonial border drawn up between them merely reflected the formal rule of empire, but not necessarily the colonial reality, where settlers, Africans, trade and communication crossed relatively freely. Furthermore, the search for geopolitical security in Southern Africa was a transnational concern, where Britain had to

⁴⁴ C.A Bayly et al., ‘AHR Conversation: On Transnational History’, *American Historical Review*, 111, 5 (2006), 1446.

⁴⁵ A.G. Hopkins, ‘Back to the Future: From National History to Imperial History’, *Past & Present*, 164 (1999), 205.

⁴⁶ See especially Paul Kennedy, *The Rise of Anglo-German Antagonism, 1860-1914* (London, 1980).

⁴⁷ See Richard Drayton, ‘Trans-European Collaboration in the History of Imperialism, 1500-2000’ in Drayton, *Masks of Imperial Power* (London, forthcoming).

⁴⁸ See, for instance, Prosser Gifford and Wm. Roger Louis, *Britain and Germany in Africa: Imperial Rivalry and Colonial Rule* (New Haven, 1967).

⁴⁹ L.H. Gann and Peter Duignan, *The Rulers of German Africa, 1884-1914* (Stanford, 1977), xi.

⁵⁰ L.H. Gann and Peter Duignan, *The Rulers of British Africa, 1884-1914* (Stanford, 1979), 18.

intimately interact with other actors such as the BSAC and Germany in order to pacify risings and maintain stability on the borderlands.

The interactions and collaborations between Britain and Germany in Africa have been explored by, among others, Ulrike Lindner, who in *Koloniale Begegnungen* (2011) displayed the connectedness between British and German colonial spheres in Southern and East Africa, arguing that there was a 'shared colonial project' in existence.⁵¹ This issue of collaboration is also relevant in Southern Rhodesia, although it was of a different nature, as this was 'internal' to the British Empire where the government and the BSAC saw changing relations develop around the 1896 rebellion. However, as will be evident throughout this thesis, co-operation did not necessarily replace an antagonistic sentiment between the colonial powers and between the government and a sub-imperial actor like the BSAC. Indeed, co-operation coexisted alongside rivalry. This will be particularly evident in the case of GSWA where British actors remained suspicious of German intentions and at times hesitated or even refused to co-operate against the Herero and Nama. Nevertheless, it is appropriate to consider Anglo-German colonialism in Southern Africa within a transnational framework to understand the premises and contexts in which colonial rule was effectuated and violence against the colonised in the face of resistance was perpetrated. Another crucial aspect of entanglement was that colonial powers learned from each other. Practices proven to be useful and new norms of violence in colonial warfare soon set new standards and caused inspiration that could easily move across the colonial border.⁵²

According to Michel Werner and Bénédicte Zimmermann, entangled history allows us 'to reconsider the interactions between different societies or cultures.'⁵³ It renders possible the merger of comparative and transfer studies which have traditionally been seen as opposites, since comparative analysis requires the acknowledgement of defined entities,

⁵¹ Ulrike Lindner, *Koloniale Begegnungen. Deutschland und Großbritannien als Imperialmächte in Afrika 1880-1914* (Frankfurt am Main, 2011), 458. For further studies concerning the entanglement of Anglo-German colonialism, see also Lindner, 'Encounters Over the Border: The Shaping of Colonial Identities in Neighbouring British and German Colonies in Southern Africa' in Lindner et al., *Hybrid Cultures- Nervous States: Britain and Germany in a (Post)Colonial World* (Amsterdam, 2010). Also, Ronald Dreyer, *The Mind of Official Imperialism. British and Cape Government Perception of German rule in Namibia from the Heligoland-Zanzibar Treaty to the Kruger Telegram, 1890-1896* (Essen, 1987).

⁵² Volker Barth and Roland Cvetkovski (eds.), *Imperial Co-Operation and Transfer, 1870-1930* (London, 2015), 7-9.

⁵³ Michael Werner and Bénédicte Zimmermann, 'Beyond Comparison: Histoire Croisée and the Challenge of Reflexivity', *History and Theory*, 45 (2006), 30.

often nations.⁵⁴ Furthermore, according to Werner and Zimmermann, entangled history can showcase how the interconnectedness in history also creates meaning in different contexts.⁵⁵ This thesis does not seek to make outright comparisons of colonial rule; nor does it seek to investigate how German and British colonialism were entangled into one another in the same vein as, for instance, Lindner. Instead, the transnational method of this thesis is a revamped – or rather asymmetrical – entangled history. The entanglement here is one through time and space: these events, despite their dissimilarities, were connected through the same events at Versailles, and also, since the two cases occurred within the same region and timeframe, through regional dynamics. Indeed, this thesis is historically situated in a context where other central events were highly influential on the circumstances of the cases and on how colonial rule and violence was perceived. For instance, consistently in the background were the ongoing troubles between British and Boers in Southern Africa; in the first case, the growing antagonism leading up to the South African War (1899-1902) affected and shaped policies and strategies regarding Southern Rhodesia and the BSAC. Furthermore, the BSAC itself, with Cecil Rhodes in charge, played a crucial role in the outbreak of war in 1899, as exemplified by the Jameson Raid in 1895. In the case of GSWA, Anglo-Boer relations and the war had a profound impact on the colony and on Anglo-German relations in Southern Africa. As will be shown, British officials were concerned by the possible ramifications that the war in GSWA could have on their own territory and how this would, in one way or another, influence the Boer population to possibly take up arms. The South African War changed the political and economic balance in the region in favour of Britain but also allowed for a fragile peace to exist between British and Boers. Sub-imperial forces such as the BSAC and rival actors such as Germany, therefore, either influenced or threatened this delicate situation. Thus, these two events are interwoven through time and space and are influenced by wider regional dynamics and events, which is particularly evident when approached from the standpoint of the same actor across the trajectory under scrutiny in this thesis.

But it remains important to state that the Southern Rhodesia case is not directly connected to or entangled with the GSWA case. Furthermore, while Britain and South Africa

⁵⁴ For the transfer studies' critique of the comparative approach, see, for instance, Matthias Middell, 'Kulturtransfer und historische Komparatistik, Thesen zu ihrem Verhältnis,' *Comparativ*, 10 (2000), and Gabriele Lingelbach, 'Erträge und Grenzen zweier Ansätze: Kulturtransfer und Vergleich am Beispiel der französischen und amerikanischen Geschichtswissenschaft während des 19. Jahrhunderts' in Christoph Conrad and Sebastian Conrad (eds.), *Die Nation schreiben: Geschichtswissenschaft im internationalen Vergleich* (Göttingen, 2002).

⁵⁵ Werner and Zimmermann, 'Beyond Comparison', 32. See also Jani Marjanen, 'Undermining Methodological Nationalism: Historie Croisée of Concepts as Transnational History' in Mathias Albers, Gesa Blihm, Jan Helmig, Andreas Leuttsch and Jochen Walter (eds.), *Transnational Political Spaces: Agents – Structures – Encounters* (Frankfurt, 2009), 239.

were deeply entangled in the affair in GSWA, Germany was not entangled in the events in Southern Rhodesia. In the GSWA case, more conventional traces of entangled history are evident, as it explores British collaboration and connectivity across the colonial border. However, this is exclusively from the British aspect, not the German. Similar traces of entangled history are not evident in the Southern Rhodesia case, as this was internal to the British imperial sphere. What is examined here is the government-company relations concerning colonial rule and violence. Hence, there is a certain asymmetry to the two cases in terms of entanglement. Additionally, the cases differ significantly both in scale and in the nature of how they developed. Here it is important to reiterate that this thesis does not seek to investigate these two cases comparatively, nor to examine how they were connected in themselves. They happened at different times and in different places and had profound dissimilarities. Yet, as shown, both these events were connected by the portrayals at Versailles and through the perceptions of a single author: British officials. When approached from the angle of British officials with the colonial question at Versailles in mind, they may reveal certain ways in which colonial violence and evidence of misrule were managed and tailored to suit the specific diplomatic and political situation. Asymmetric entangled history in this thesis, therefore, should be understood as an approach that gauges the interconnectedness and entanglements of these two rather different cases in different contexts and at different times, but approached from a common historical actor.

The Official Mind, Actors and Source Material

The sources used in this thesis are mainly official documents retrieved from the National Archives (Kew, UK) and the German Bundesarchiv, Lichterfelde. The thesis therefore does not attempt to scrutinise the perspectives of Africans and their subjugation, and consequently, the *experience* of colonial rule and violence remains a marginal theme. It will be studied as a sub-theme throughout, but it will not be at the forefront of this inquiry. However, as will be shown, African agency was important, as the reactions and perceptions of British officials often came as a response to situations brought about by Africans. Specific cases such as that of Nama resistance leader Jakob Marengo remain instructive and will accordingly be emphasised, but only as a way to further the inquiry of the thesis, rather than as a study of colonial resistance and African agency in itself.

The focus on the officials investigates the view from Whitehall and especially the Colonial Office and the Foreign Office (henceforth CO and FO respectively). Reports, telegrams etc. are therefore the most frequently featured array of sources used in this thesis.

Sources from, for instance, parliamentary debates remain at the fringes of this inquiry. These sources may certainly pose interesting angles and perspectives, but they do not address the core premises of decision-making and colonial policies. Such policies and the whole scope of foreign relations were primarily in the hands of the executive power – the government. Parliament was without much influence concerning foreign relations and the government even held the right to refuse information to parliament ‘on the ground that the release of such information would be prejudicial to the public interest.’⁵⁶ In Thomas Otte’s *The Foreign Office Mind* (2011), the underlying ideas and principles that existed in the halls of the FO are observed as creating a particular mindset on an institutional basis. Although this was not monolithic, it nonetheless suggests that the institutions of the British government can indeed be studied as entities.⁵⁷ Thus, this thesis will focus on the executive power as a collective body where decision-making and perceptions of colonial rule and violence were constructed. The CO and WO mainly dealt with affairs regarding the 1896 Ndebele rising, while for the Herero-Nama war in GSWA, the FO remained a key institution. Although the CO was mostly included in the affairs on GSWA too, this differentiation nonetheless showcases discrepancies in how each case was perceived. For instance, Southern Rhodesia was ostensibly embedded in imperial policies, whereas GSWA was more interwoven into British foreign policy toward Germany. But in both cases it is evident that broader imperial policies and interests of the British government were crucial. What is therefore key here is that despite these differentiations, the official mind in this thesis should be understood as a conversation spanning the CO, FO, WO, BSAC and even Germany.

On the ground, several colonial actors were at play and provided Whitehall with numerous reports, telegrams and information about the two cases as well as being imperative in effectuating British colonial policies and the relations with GSWA and the BSAC respectively. It is important to note here that while Southern Rhodesia and GSWA were administered by the BSAC and Germany respectively, the surrounding territories, particularly the Cape Colony and the Bechuanaland Protectorate, were under the administration of the CO, the Cape Government and the FO.⁵⁸ Through the nineteenth century, a colonial administration was built up in the Cape and in 1853 it was granted responsible government and thus a degree of self-determination.⁵⁹ Later, after the South African War, the Transvaal also saw a gradual move towards self-governance in 1907. The links between British officials

⁵⁶ Donald G. Bishop, *The Administration of British Foreign Relations* (Binghampton NY, 1961), 3 & 456-57.

⁵⁷ Thomas Otte, *The Foreign Office Mind* (Cambridge, 2011), 5-6.

⁵⁸ For instance, the FO had authority over protectorates, thus seeing them caught between foreign and colonial affairs. See Zara Steiner, *The Foreign Office and Foreign Policy, 1898-1914* (Cambridge, 1967), 67.

⁵⁹ Lindner, ‘Encounters Over the Border’, 12.

in the metropole and in the colonial 'periphery', therefore, were part of a rather complex set of different actors depending on where and when. Matsuzaki contends that there are three arenas in which the colonial state acts: First, the international scene, where diplomacy between European colonial powers influenced colonial policy and interests; second, the home arena, where the 'colonial state' coordinated with the metropole, which could be a point of disagreement, but also one of common policy or diplomatic effort; and third, the domestic arena, which can be reduced to the conventional encounter between colonised and coloniser.⁶⁰ Thus, the colonial state and its men-on-the-spot acted within a wider framework that entailed international relations on a broader scale, as well as interacting in relation to the metropolitan institutions as well as the more immediate local interests.

This transnational framework of administrative and executive power meant that the men-on-the-spot often acted in accordance with policies and regulations as decided from Whitehall. Often, they interpreted these liberally, but they followed them nonetheless, perhaps because senior appointments in the colonial service were still made by the CO.⁶¹ At the same time, these colonial actors displayed different interests than those in the metropole. The High Commissioner, the Governor and the Cape government were all important actors that drove British colonialism on the ground for different purposes and with different visions, both amongst themselves and also different from the ambitions of Whitehall. As will be shown, High Commissioner Alfred Milner had a very different view to the CO in London of forced labour and 'public works' in Southern Rhodesia. Similarly, the Cape Government were somewhat reluctant to aid Germany in her counter-insurgency efforts, whereas the FO were keen not to harm relations with Germany and thereby insisted on South African assistance in the borderlands. The ways in which each case was perceived and responded to by British officials were always communicated through these different actors and channels, and therefore, were subjected to differing views and agendas. All of these actors were, of course, responding to the background pressure of local African, Afrikaner and English opinion, but it is beyond the scope of this thesis to map these currents of sentiment.

In this thesis there are furthermore two 'secondary' actors: the BSAC and Germany (both as a nation and in the form of its colonial administration). With regard to the first case on Southern Rhodesia, the BSAC itself, with Cecil Rhodes in charge, remains a crucial actor with whom both colonial and metropolitan officials engaged. The BSAC drove colonialism on the ground in Southern Rhodesia and it was *company* rule that was scrutinised by British

⁶⁰ Matsuzaki, 'Placing the Colonial State in the Middle', 114-18.

⁶¹ Peter Marshall, 'The British experience of imperial rule' in John Smith (ed.), *Administering Empire, the British Colonial Service in Retrospect* (London, 1999), 1.

officials in 1896. For the BSAC, the colonial project here was based on profits and a desire to generate profits from the supposed mineral wealth, and this was therefore the premise upon which British officials acted and sought to control the BSAC in order to safeguard their own imperial and political interests. The other secondary actor(s), Germany and the German colonial administration in GSWA, were also central actors with whom these British officials engaged. Similar to how the BSAC was to be controlled, so too was the British response to German colonialism embedded in a similar pattern in terms of how potential scandals and cases of misrule were to be managed. However, German colonialism had its own aims and purposes: therefore, this has also been examined in the case study where, for instance, the desire to create a German state and ‘white man’s land’ was imperative to the policies and practices applied by the German colonial administration. Important to mention here is that one aspect that complicates a direct comparison of official perceptions from British and German officials, and is part of the reason why this thesis does not seek to compare Anglo-German colonialism *per se*, is the fact that in Britain, imperial policy was a much larger issue. Indeed, the CO was prestigious and occupied a whole building and office in Whitehall, whereas the German equivalent, the *Reichskolonialamt*, was until 1907 a department confined to a corner in the *Auswärtiges Amt* (Foreign Office).⁶²

Ever since Ronald Robinson and John Gallagher with Alice Denny published their monumental *Africa and the Victorians: the official mind of imperialism* (1961), the ‘official mind’ has been a crucial element in understanding British imperialism. The official mind was the policy-makers, the officials, the clerks and the secretaries working at the ministries and governmental offices in Whitehall, London. While these were not the only perpetrators behind the British Empire, in terms of both expansion and rule, all traces lead, in one way or another, to Whitehall. This is not to say that Whitehall decided everything, but rather that it was involved in many aspects of empire.⁶³ The main thesis in *Africa and the Victorians*, however, was that these officials in the metropole sought to manage threats and crises in the colonial periphery rather than driving imperial expansion for its own sake.⁶⁴ At the top of their agenda during the ‘scramble for Africa’, British officials were mainly concerned with securing India and the trade routes, particularly the Suez Canal, and thus Robinson and

⁶² Andreas Eckert and Michael Pesek, ‘Bürokratische Ordnung und Koloniale Praxis. Herrschaft und Verwaltung in Preussen und Afrika’ in Sebastian Conrad and Jürgen Osterhammel (eds.), *Das Kaiserreich transnational – Deutschland in der Welt 1871-1914* (Göttingen, 2006), 93.

⁶³ Ronald Robinson and John Gallagher with Alice Denny, *Africa and the Victorians. The Official Mind of Imperialism* [orig. 1961] (London, 2015), 19-20.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 14-16.

Gallagher suggested that the main cause of imperial expansion was to be found in the colonial sphere. Whitehall as a historical actor, however, has been revisited by several scholars: perhaps most notably Peter Cain and A.G. Hopkins, who emphasised the role of the City of London and the ‘Gentlemanly capitalists’ as influencing officials and being a prime mover of imperial expansion.⁶⁵ The debate over these various motivations and causations of imperial expansion cannot be explored fully in depth here, but remains central to the historiography of the British Empire.⁶⁶

The official mind and the colonial officers in the field have been examined in a few studies, which have mainly focused on the background of these officials, their education and their concerns.⁶⁷ However, broader interest in the actors in imperial history took a turn with the publication of Edward Said’s monumental *Orientalism* (1978). Said argued that Western officials had a prejudiced perception of the colonised as shaped by what he termed ‘orientalism’.⁶⁸ On the basis of this, there has been a body of work, especially in African history, which has turned away from official actors and instead showcased the experiences of the colonised.⁶⁹ However, as Dane Kennedy has convincingly argued, post-colonial theory has reinvigorated imperial history and asked important questions, but in many instances, the historical circumstances have been lost.⁷⁰ A recurrent problem with postcolonial studies is its preoccupation with a critique of colonialism and ‘modernity’ rather than actual historical research and its continuous ‘occlusion’ of European history as part of colonial history in general.⁷¹ Thus, it is plausible to move beyond the paradigm of postcolonial theory and study the coloniser without diminishing the importance of understanding the colonised. It is no longer a direct matter of choosing to write from either position, and in doing so, automatically repudiating the other. In this thesis, attention is directed at officials in London,

⁶⁵ See Peter Cain and Anthony Hopkins, ‘Gentlemanly Capitalism and British Expansion Overseas II: New Imperialism, 1850-1945’, *The Economic History Review*, 40, 1 (1987).

⁶⁶ For an overview of the debate see Wm. Roger Louis (ed.), *The Robinson and Gallagher Controversy* (New York, 1976). See also John Flint, ‘Britain and the Scramble for Africa’ in Robin Winks (ed.), *The Oxford History of the British Empire: Historiography* (Oxford, 1999).

⁶⁷ See, for instance, Anthony Kirk-Greene, *On Crown Service: A History of HM Colonial and Overseas Civil Services, 1837-1997* (London, 1999) and *Symbol of Authority: The British District Officer in Africa* (London, 2005). Also Robert Heussler, *Yesterday’s Rulers and: The Making of the British Colonial Service* (Binghamton, 1963) and Christopher Prior, *Exporting Empire: Africa, colonial officials and the construction of the imperial state c. 1900-39* (Manchester, 2013).

⁶⁸ Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York, 1978).

⁶⁹ Terence Ranger, for instance, has pioneered this perspective, as evident in titles cited throughout the thesis. In the history of SWA, Jan-Bart Gewald’s *Herero Heroes: A Socio-Political History of the Herero in Namibia, 1890-1923* (Oxford, 1999) remains the most instructive publication on the history of the Herero.

⁷⁰ Dane Kennedy, ‘Imperial History and Post-Colonial Theory’, *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 24, 3 (1996), 356.

⁷¹ Frederick Cooper, ‘Postcolonial Studies and the Study of History’ in Ania Loomba, Suvir Kaul, Matti Bunzl, Antoinette Burton, Jed Esty (eds.), *Postcolonial Studies and Beyond* (Durham, 2005), 403.

thus the coloniser, and admittedly this means that the perspective from the colonised has been obscured. However, both represent different aspects of a given historical trajectory and each should be appreciated and understood as such.

The reality of these officials and the sources they have left behind were naturally very different from the colonial reality as it was shaped by actors on the ground, whether indigenous, settler or other. However, with the increasing attention to colonial officials, it has been established, almost as a foregone conclusion, that Whitehall did not hold any local sway in the colonies and that decision-making, and hence imperialism, was very much left to the ‘man-on-the-spot’.⁷² As will be shown through this thesis, there were many incidents where decisions taken in London directly shaped the actions of the colonial officers on the ground. It is true that the government did not oversee everything and that its control of empire was not monolithic. However, Lord Selborne, High Commissioner to South Africa, wrote to Lord Elgin, Secretary of State for the Colonies, in 1907: ‘at present, in cases of divergence of opinion or interest between the British South African Colonies, even in the respect of affairs which are strictly the internal affairs of South Africa, the ultimate authority is the Imperial Parliament at Westminster.’⁷³ Furthermore, as Ronald Dreyer has argued, foreign policy decisions regarding the colonies were the prerogative of Whitehall and not the colonial administrations themselves.⁷⁴

Naturally, there was a significant difference between the colonial reality in the metropole and that of the colony itself. This centre-periphery dichotomy is, by now, a long-standing and conventional observation and the multitude of different actors have already been alluded to. However, it would be a mistake to completely dismiss the role of Whitehall in the wider network of imperial rule and power when it came to decision-making and the unfolding of events in the colonies.⁷⁵ In this study, the role of metropolitan officials remains crucial to ascertain the broader ideologies that might have shaped perceptions of Anglo-German colonialism while both the case studies unfolded, but also for the perception of 1918 as constituted in the Blue Book.

Christopher Prior seeks to understand the mentality of British officials by examining ‘what British colonial officials thought and why.’ Prior rightly highlights the fact that there has been

⁷² Blake Duffield, “‘The Grey Men of Empire’: Framing Britain’s Official Mind, 1854-1934’ (University of Arkansas, D. Phil thesis, 2016). See also, Ronald Hyam, *Britain’s Imperial Century, 1815-1914: A study of Empire and Expansion* (Basingstoke, 2002), 2-3.

⁷³ TNA: CO 417/442: Memorandum by Selborne, 7 January 1907, enclosed in Selborne to Elgin, 14 January 1907.

⁷⁴ Dreyer, *Mind of Official Imperialism*, 12-13.

⁷⁵ Robinson and Gallagher, *Africa and the Victorians*, 21.

little focus on the principles of the official mind in Africa and that if studied at all, it is usually in a more politically concerned study or one that focuses on what they did rather than what they thought.⁷⁶ Nevertheless, we should approach the sources of the official mind as a piece of the wider imperial puzzle with caution. We must be aware that these sources do not tell us the entire story, as they leave out many aspects. But regardless of historiographical tendencies, they are a piece of the puzzle nonetheless. Indeed, the sources left behind by these officials do, after all, reveal myriad historical factors, including political interests, stakes, strategies and broader policies of imperial rule and expansion. But they also inform us about how humanitarianism and racism, as two crucial developments at the time, both having roots in a wider imperial origin (i.e. slave trade, racial hierarchies), were received and perceived, and what impact they had in the metropole. For instance, humanitarianism penetrated metropolitan ideals and hence Whitehall to a greater extent than the men-on-the-spot. Since the officials studied here were mainly located in London, they were subjected to a different reality to that of the colonies. This made for different interpretations of colonial issues and problematiques, but it also meant an entirely different basis upon which their decision-making derived. Hence, the official mind responded to and acted on reports and perceptions of imperial rule in Whitehall more than to the reality and desires in the colonies themselves.⁷⁷ At the other end of the spectrum, officials in Southern Africa were less concerned by the prospect of public opinion turning against their favour than were those in London. However, according to Robinson and Gallagher, public opinion was a powerful force that swayed decision-making in Whitehall, which rendered officials reluctant to engage in imperial matters and expansion, as it could mean that they would be held responsible.⁷⁸

Several publications have showcased the importance of the public in colonial matters, both through its interest and agency in pressuring officials and through the fascination of imperial cultures. John Mackenzie, for instance, has revealed the propagandistic aspects of empire, which fused nationalism and empire into a common culture. But because of the once prevailing focus on official sources, 'public sources' received less attention, meaning that the idea of a metropolitan culture of empire was vague and thus seemingly unimportant.⁷⁹ Catherine Hall, among others, has shown that the British public was widely engaged with the culture of empire and particularly with the representation of 'the other'.⁸⁰ There are several

⁷⁶ Prior, *Exporting Empire*, 1-2.

⁷⁷ Robinson and Gallagher, *Africa and the Victorians*, 21.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 23.

⁷⁹ John M. Mackenzie, 'Empire and Metropolitan Cultures' in Andrew Porter (ed.), *The Oxford History of the British Empire: The Nineteenth Century* (Oxford, 1999), 272.

⁸⁰ Catherine Hall, *Civilizing Subjects: Metropole and colony in the English imagination* (Cambridge, 2002).

indications that late nineteenth century Britain was fascinated and engaged with empire. Exhibitions, publications, societies, museums and plays all bear witness to an increasing interest in the vastness of Britain's imperial territories and the exoticism concerning faraway places, objects and cultures. But according to Bernard Porter, the British public was largely 'absent minded' when it came to empire.⁸¹ It would be fallacious to construct a clear dichotomy between metropolitan cultures and the official mind and the sources it left behind as they interacted. Not only were the officials also part of the public, but they were also swayed by the pressure of public opinion on policy-making. Especially during the South African War, public opinion played a crucial role, as the so-called Khaki Election of 1900 was crucial to how the war was to be continued.⁸²

Prior to Robinson and Gallagher's thesis on the official mind, it was often surmised that the public opinion that influenced policy-making, particular concerning foreign relations, before the twentieth century was constituted by smaller groupings of governmental officials and small groups of 'influential citizens who, by reading the press, attending dinners and belonging to the right clubs, obtained a large amount of information on foreign affairs and followed them closely.'⁸³ In other words, it was only the government officials and the metropolitan elite that held any sway and interest in foreign affairs, which here included colonial matters. The impact of public opinion and pressure groups was revisited by John Darwin in 1999. For Darwin, British imperial expansion was driven by 'a chaotic pluralism' of, among others, commercial, strategic and humanitarian interests in which the role of the government was to both facilitate and regulate these interests. But at the same time, Whitehall also had to see to its own purposes, such as overseeing its own commitments, avoiding diplomatic embarrassment and securing strategic interests. Darwin, therefore, called for further explorations of the role of public opinion and pressure groups in the broader prism behind British imperial expansion.⁸⁴ These groups could be financial, such as the gentlemanly capitalists, or as more relevant here, humanitarian lobbies such as the Aborigines' Protection Society (henceforth APS) and the Congo Reform Movement (henceforth CRM). Public opinion, therefore, was intrinsically entangled into the interests and perceptions of both colonial and foreign policy. However, the official mind as a social group 'did more than respond to pressures and calculate interest; their decisions were not

⁸¹ Max Beloff, *Britain's Liberal Empire, 1897-1921* (London 1989) and Bernard Porter, *The Absent-minded Imperialists: Empire, Society and Culture in Britain* (Oxford, 2004), 311.

⁸² Paul Readman, 'The Conservative Party, Patriotism, and British Politics: The Case of the General Election of 1900', *Journal of British Studies*, 40, 1 (2001), 109.

⁸³ Bishop, *The Administration of British Foreign Relations*, 183-84.

⁸⁴ John Darwin, 'Imperialism and the Victorians: The Dynamics of Territorial Expansion', *The English Historical Review*, 112, 447(1997), 641-42.

mere mechanical choices of expedients.⁸⁵ Indeed, they were also motivated by various factors such as duty of government, international relations and the conviction of right and wrong.

Yet, what may be said to be lacking in Robinson and Gallagher's study of the official mind is a more thorough examination of the attitudes and ideologies that directed them.⁸⁶ Jürgen Osterhammel has identified three core elements of colonial reasoning, which may have influenced the official mind. First is the notion of an irreconcilable difference in the construction of an inferior 'other' vis-à-vis racial theories and persuasions. Second, there was a genuine belief in empire as having the right, and even the obligation, to expand as part of a civilising mission. Third, and lastly, there was a 'utopian vision' of how pure administration would function. While the first two elements indicate that racism and humanitarianism were forceful elements that shaped the mentality of the official mind, the latter represents a more practical, yet imagined perception of colonial rule. Indeed, concepts such as protectorates and trusteeship represent a certain rhetoric of empire which sustained not only how colonial rule was effectuated on paper, but also how it was imagined or seen as a utopia in reference to, for instance, humanitarian ideals. All three elements, however, rested on the conviction that the Europeans had uncovered 'chaos' in Africa and elsewhere which made it necessary to civilise and implement an effective administrative framework.⁸⁷ This is therefore a basis upon which colonial rule and violence were both carried out and perceived. The moralism of these ideologies was present throughout the timespan of this thesis, albeit shaped by the different contexts. The utopian beliefs were a way to create an ideal against which to hold cases of maladministration and to mobilise critique of a colonising power, and were, as will be shown, present both at Versailles and in the pre-war humanitarianism decreed in treaties such as the Berlin Treaty. The two first elements in Osterhammel's model, however, adhere best to the contemporary contexts of the cases where colonial rule and the right to govern and subsequently subjugate Africans were on display.

⁸⁵ Robinson and Gallagher, *Africa and the Victorians*, 20.

⁸⁶ George Shepperson, 'Africa, the Victorians and Imperialism' in Louis (ed.), *The Robinson and Gallagher controversy*, 167.

⁸⁷ Jürgen Osterhammel, *Colonialism: A Theoretical Overview* (Princeton, 1997), 108-12.

1 Colonialism at Versailles and Ideologies of Colonial Rule

Beginning at the End: The Colonial Question at Versailles

The treaty of Versailles remains a crucial moment in imperial history and brings the history of GSWA and Southern Rhodesia together through the Blue and White Books respectively. In 1915, during the First World War, South African forces invaded GSWA. This invasion was significant in many ways and was one of the major African theatres of war. But it also had regional ramifications when the outbreak of war prompted a new Boer rebellion – the so-called Maritz rebellion – now that Britain would be unable to aid the newly established Union of South Africa.⁸⁸ Ironically, this rebellion was eventually quelled by two of the main figures fighting for the Boers in the South African War of 1899-1902. Louis Botha and Jan Christian Smuts had both risen to prominent military and political positions in South Africa and in 1915 both oversaw the invasion of GSWA.⁸⁹ British plans to invade GSWA existed long before the outbreak of war. In 1910 a War Office report made detailed observations and instructions.⁹⁰ The report noted that while the white settlers would ‘be averse to incorporation into the South African Union’, the indigenous population would more easily be swayed, especially since their numbers had decreased and ‘the Herero tribe has almost been exterminated.’⁹¹ The overall aim of this invasion was both expansionist and diplomatic, as Whitehall contended that an invasion of GSWA, either immediately after the outbreak of war or at its closing stages, would be ‘undertaken chiefly in order to influence the terms of peace.’⁹²

Although he does not pay much attention to the Blue Book, Wm. Roger Louis in *Germany's Lost Colonies* (1967) provides probably the best analysis of the colonial question at Versailles. The book tracks the changing views and diplomatic challenges of Britain and her

⁸⁸ For the 1914 ‘Maritz’ rebellion, see T.R.H Davenport, ‘The South African Rebellion, 1914’, *The English Historical Review*, 78, 306 (1963).

⁸⁹ Ian Van der Waag, ‘The Battle of Sandfontein, 26 September 1914: South African military reform and the German South-West Africa Campaign, 1914-1915’, *First World War Studies*, 4, 2 (2013).

⁹⁰ TNA: WO 106/47: War Office Secret Report, CX7249, 10 April 1910.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 32.

⁹² TNA: WO 106/47: Commander in Chief, South Africa to the Secretary State for War, 8 March 1909.

Commonwealth Allies pertaining to the conquered German colonies and studies how the mandate system emerged as a solution.⁹³ Where the general sentiment in 1884 when Germany acquired its colonies was positive, this was no longer the case by the outbreak of the war, and so, in 1916 and 1917, two secret government committees decided that the conquered German colonies were to be annexed.⁹⁴ In general, before the outbreak of the war in 1914, German colonialism was seen as acceptable and humanitarian groups such as the APS even advocated for German rule to take over Belgian and Portuguese colonies on the same token as the British and French, as these were ‘enlightened’ colonial powers.⁹⁵ However, from a geopolitical standpoint, Britain had increasingly wanted to get rid of its German neighbour in Southern Africa since the discovery of gold in the rand in 1886. With incidents such as the Kruger Telegram and German sympathy and support for the Boers during the South African War, matters had only grown worse and there was a conviction that the German threat had to be dealt with.⁹⁶ When the Union of South Africa was established in 1910, it sought to manifest its position as a sovereign dominion. This meant a gradual distancing from the German colony to the west, and with the outbreak of the war and the subsequent invasion, the question that now arose was how to integrate GSWA and its German settlers into the Union. These geopolitical interests of the British and South African governments were supported by the fact that during the war, the view of German colonialism among the British public had changed.⁹⁷

As Christina Twomey has observed, the excesses of German forces in Europe during the war meant that Germany’s colonial endeavours were also scrutinised, which resulted in the publication of various books, articles and pamphlets condemning German colonialism as a whole.⁹⁸ For instance, Sir Hugh Clifford, Governor of the Gold Coast, published a book titled *German Colonies, A Plea for the Native Races* (1918), in which he argued that Germany had ‘proved herself a singularly bad and restless neighbour’ (here in Togo) and as such the British dominions in the Pacific and South Africa were to face a vital yet difficult battle in preventing the restoration of Germany’s colonies which would be against ‘established principles of

⁹³ Louis, *Germany’s Lost Colonies*, vii-x.

⁹⁴ Christina Twomey, ‘Atrocity Narratives and Inter-Imperial Rivalry: Britain, Germany and the Treatment of ‘Native Races’, 1904-1939’ in Tom Crook, Rebecca Gill and Bertrand Taithe (eds.), *Evil, Barbarism and Empire: Britain and Abroad, c. 1830-2000* (London, 2010), 215-16.

⁹⁵ Wm. Roger Louis, ‘Great Britain and German Expansion in Africa, 1884-1919’ in Gifford and Louis (eds.), *Britain and Germany in Africa*, 36.

⁹⁶ Kennedy, *The Rise of Anglo-German Antagonism*, 251 and Louis, *Germany’s Lost Colonies*, 23-26.

⁹⁷ Wm. Roger Louis, ‘The South West African Origins of the ‘Sacred Trust’, 1914-1919’, *African Affairs*, 66, 262 (1967), 21-22.

⁹⁸ Twomey, ‘Atrocity Narratives’, 214-15

justice.⁹⁹ Influential humanitarian societies such as the APS also remained in constant communication with the FO during the negotiations to ensure that 'the welfare of the natives was safeguarded' in the question of the future of Germany's colonies.¹⁰⁰ Thus, by the time the peace negotiations were initiated, the general perception of German colonialism was extremely negative in public as well as official circles in Britain, and according to Louis, this conviction was so popular that it was almost impossible to advocate for Germany to retain its colonies.¹⁰¹

From the perspective of the British government, it was important to maintain positive relations with the dominions, and with the participation in the war, securing Germany's old colonies as mandates was an attractive way of doing exactly that. The desire to seize Germany's colonies, therefore, may have been strongest in the dominions where the security of their homelands was believed to be at stake.¹⁰² Jan Christian Smuts was elected to be a representative of the Union of South Africa at Versailles, where he remained supportive of American president, Woodrow Wilson's idea of a League of Nations. According to Smuts, however, the league was not only considered an ideal successor to the European and particularly the British Empire, but was also to be modelled on the British imperial system.¹⁰³

Where Article 119 effectuated the deprivation of Germany's colonies, Article 22 of the Versailles Settlement created the mandate system which decreed that those areas where the inhabitants were not considered able to govern themselves would be kept 'in sacred trust' by 'advanced nations' in order to be given independence when ready.¹⁰⁴ This, of course, echoed the logic of pre-war humanitarianism vis-à-vis the civilising mission, as will be discussed below. In the end, three different types of mandate were defined: 'A' mandates, which were to apply to the former Ottoman territories. 'B' mandates, which were to be the former German colonies in East, West and Central Africa; and 'C' mandates, which were earmarked for GSWA and the pacific islands. 'C' mandates were very different, as they were applied to what were then considered to be backward areas.¹⁰⁵ Their populations were seen as incapable of governing themselves and resided too far from 'civilisation', and therefore

⁹⁹ Sir Hugh Clifford, *German Colonies: A Plea for the Native Races* (London, 1918), 5-6.

¹⁰⁰ Bodleian Library, Mss. Brit Emp. S22 G439, International Organisation for Control 1918.

¹⁰¹ Louis, *Germany's Lost Colonies*, 86-87.

¹⁰² Gaddis Smith, 'The British Government and the Disposition of the German Colonies in Africa, 1914-1918' in Gifford and Louis (eds.), *Britain and Germany in Africa*, 275-76.

¹⁰³ Pedersen, *The Guardians*, 27.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., 1-2.

¹⁰⁵ George Curry, 'Woodrow Wilson, Jan Smuts, and the Versailles Settlement', *The American Historical Review*, 66, 4 (1961), 981.

they were to be administered as an integral part of the mandate power (Union of South Africa and Australia respectively) and subject to its laws.¹⁰⁶ While this served as ‘booty and buffers’ for the Union of South Africa and Australia respectively, there may also have been concern over who would take the place of the German colonial administration if they did not. The League of Nations would be a new player and unable to purposefully fulfil that obligation, and therefore some feared that ‘black intellectuals’ (W.E.B. DuBois was mentioned by name) would swoop into these ‘vacated’ lands and establish ‘an African colony run by Negroes.’¹⁰⁷ This was an irrational fear, but nonetheless shows that there were concerns over the future of Germany’s former colonies if these were not agreed to be governed by a ‘civilised’ colonial power. This shows that there was a general desire to reach an agreement on a new global order wherein colonies still existed despite Wilson’s disdain for them.

Smuts shared Wilson’s scepticism towards imperialism on the one hand and sought to extend the borders of the Union on the other.¹⁰⁸ Plans for the de facto annexation of GSWA were in place from the outbreak of war as the Union extended its railways and allocated lands for white settlers, although the territory was not formally annexed.¹⁰⁹ Smuts contended that annexation of the German colonies ‘should be pushed for to the utmost.’¹¹⁰ SWA was eventually transferred to the Union of South Africa and formally remained a mandate until 1990, when it finally gained its independence as Namibia after decades of turmoil and resistance. The Versailles Treaty of Peace submitted to the South African Parliament clearly stated the responsibilities and the effect to which the mandate over SWA was to be formulated. In Part IV, Germany was to ‘renounce all her rights and privileges whatever in or over territory in which being there or to her allies.’¹¹¹ Furthermore, ‘The native inhabitants of the former German overseas possessions shall be entitled to the diplomatic protection of the Governments exercising authority over those territories.’¹¹² Thus, the Union of South Africa was to govern the territory, but while the matter might have been settled internationally, the intra-imperial arrangements were different. Similar to the treaty of Berlin in 1885 and, as we shall see, the Charter of the BSAC, the South African government was to prevent liquor and arms trade amongst the Africans, prevent any slave trade and make

¹⁰⁶ Pedersen, *The Guardians*, 29.

¹⁰⁷ TNA: CO 323/800: Dillon C. Govin to Lord Duke, Governor General, Montreal, 2 August 1918. The letter was eventually circulated among various officials in the CO and the colonies.

¹⁰⁸ Curry, ‘Woodrow Wilson’, 986.

¹⁰⁹ Pedersen, *The Guardians*, 20.

¹¹⁰ Louis, *Germany’s Lost Colonies*, 119.

¹¹¹ TNA: CO 633/124: Union of South Africa: Treaty of Peace, Part IV: Germany’s Rights and Interests outside Germany, Article 118.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, Article 127

sure that ‘no forced labour shall be permitted except for essential public works and services.’¹¹³ The Versailles treatment thus echoed the same principles and responsibilities given to the colonial powers pre-1914, which did not prevent widespread violence and oppression. Ultimately, as Louis has correctly suggested, the mandates would ‘differ only in name from other colonial possessions.’¹¹⁴

In order to acquire support and the mandate to seize Germany’s colonies, however, the British and South Africans needed a reason. Public opinion and the spoils of war were not enough on their own, and with Wilson’s reluctance to support any imperialistic interests, he and the Americans needed convincing. Indeed, Prime Minister, Lloyd George was even fearful that the colonial question could place severe strain on Anglo-American relations.¹¹⁵ Seizing Germany’s colonies was therefore not simple and straightforward and, as a FO official noted in May 1917, ‘unless justification can be proved up it will be difficult to convince many people that we have not at any rate continued the war for purposes of aggrandizement.’¹¹⁶

The CO had possibly foreseen this, as they had directed the dominion governments to collate evidence of German colonial maladministration and excesses.¹¹⁷ The most renowned and diplomatically efficient of these reports was the Blue Book on the atrocities in GSWA titled *Report on the Natives of South-West Africa and their treatment by Germany*. To this day, the Blue Book remains one of the most important sources on the genocide, not only because of its vivid description of the horrors that unfolded, but also because it includes several eye-witness accounts from Herero and Nama survivors.¹¹⁸ The subjectivity of the Blue Book is obvious; however, several historians have reiterated its importance nonetheless. Some of the most central scholars in the field, such as Casper Erichsen and David Olusoga, contend that the Blue Book ‘stands almost entirely alone as a reliable and comprehensive exploration of the disinheritance and destruction of indigenous peoples’ throughout the history of colonialism in Africa.¹¹⁹ While this is a clear overstatement which obscures the clear methodological problems of this source, it may also be because, as Erichsen observes, many original sources on the genocide have been lost, either in the German military archives

¹¹³ TNA: CO 633/124: Correspondence Between the Secretary of State for the Colonies and the Governor-General on the Subject of the Mandate for South-West Africa and Draft Conventions, 1919, Article II

¹¹⁴ Louis, *Germany’s Lost Colonies*, 7.

¹¹⁵ Smith, ‘The British Government and the Disposition of the German Colonies’, 287.

¹¹⁶ Ibid., 290.

¹¹⁷ Twomey, ‘Atrocity Narratives’, 217.

¹¹⁸ Silvester and Gewald, *Words Cannot Be Found*, xxvii.

¹¹⁹ Olusoga and Erichsen, *Kaiser’s Holocaust*, 264.

during the Second World War or destroyed before the invasion in 1915.¹²⁰ More negatively, Brigitte Lau claimed that the Blue Book was nothing but ‘a piece of war propaganda with no credibility’ and thus a useless source.¹²¹ Lau is often disregarded, as she ardently opposed the categorisation of horrors in GSWA as genocide, as had been done in the United Nations Whitaker Report in 1985.¹²² However, as Jörg Schildknecht observes, when compared to the actual circumstances of the genocide, the statements and sources of the Blue Book can be doubted.¹²³ The Blue Book, therefore, remains an important albeit problematic source because of its subjectivity.¹²⁴ But this very subjectivity is a crucial aspect of the purpose of its publication, as it constitutes a way in which colonialism was remembered selectively and thereafter purposefully used as a diplomatic instrument during the negotiations at Versailles.¹²⁵ In other words, the subjectivity reveals its underlying agenda.

The Blue Book is structured in two parts: the first sought to establish the nature and history of German colonial rule in order to showcase the atrocities committed and the incapability of Germany to govern colonies, while the second described the German law code which had effectively created a system of exploitation and terror in which the indigenous communities had been systematically marginalised and abused.¹²⁶ The style and setup of the Blue Book suggest that the British and South African authorities were unaware or at least ill-informed of the atrocities that unfolded in GSWA.¹²⁷ As we shall see, this was far from the case. Britain was aware of and at times even took part in German counter-insurgency. This ‘selective memory’ of obscuring Britain’s awareness and involvement was important for the diplomatic value of the Blue Book because if the British knew nothing of the genocide until the 1915 invasion, they could deny any complicity and by extension righteously lay claim to GSWA as its benevolent protector.¹²⁸ Throughout the Blue Book this is repeatedly proven to be the case and its intentions remain clear:

¹²⁰ Erichsen, *Angel of Death*, 83.

¹²¹ Brigitte Lau, ‘Uncertain Certainties. The Herero-German War of 1904’, *Mbigans*, 2 (1989), 4.

¹²² Whitaker Report, United Nations Economic and Social Council Commission on Human Rights Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities, 1985. Part I, B §24. See <http://www.preventgenocide.org/prevent/UNdocs/whitaker/section5.htm#r12> (Last accessed 18 February 2017).

¹²³ Jörg Schildknecht, *Bismarck, Südwestafrika und die Kongokonferenz – Die völkerrechtlichen Grundlagen der effektiven Okkupation und ihre Nebenpflichten am Beispiel des Erwerbs der ersten deutschen Kolonie* (Hamburg, 1999), 380.

¹²⁴ Twomey, ‘Atrocity Narratives’, 225. See also Andreas Eckl, ‘The Herero Genocide of 1904: Source-critical and Methodological Considerations’, *Journal of Namibian Studies*, 3 (2014).

¹²⁵ Mads Bomholt Nielsen, ‘Selective Memory: British Perceptions of the Herero-Nama Genocide, 1904-1908 and 1918’, *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 43, 2 (2017), 323.

¹²⁶ Twomey, ‘Atrocity Narratives’, 204.

¹²⁷ Administrator’s Office, ‘Report on the Natives’, 9.

¹²⁸ Bomholt Nielsen, ‘Selective Memory’, 320.

Enough should be found in this report to convince the most confirmed sceptic of the unsuitability of the Germans to control natives, and also to show him what can be expected if the unfortunate natives of this part of Africa are ever again being handed back to the former regime.¹²⁹

Such statement directly related to the Wilsonian idealism at Versailles where overt statements of coercion, exploitation and genocide were extremely powerful.¹³⁰ The Blue Book therefore effectively portrayed mismanagement and violence as being intrinsic in German colonialism as a whole, while, as Reinhard Kössler has observed, it established a depiction of British colonialism as not merely being more efficient, but as being morally superior.¹³¹ Clifford's aforementioned publication summarises this predisposition:

The German colonial system, so young in years, ever remains the oldest system, because it is the most tyrannic, the most oppressive and illiberal, as opposed to the English – liberal par excellence. It represents the intensive exploitation of the colony to the detriment of the native population.¹³²

Such moral argumentation may be ascribed to the Wilsonian idealism at the time. However, the Blue Book also reflected the idealism of previous international conferences such as those of the Berlin Treaty in 1884-5. Indeed, the Blue Book could forcefully refer to the obligations to which Germany had ostensibly agreed to colonise Africa, where the aforementioned article 6 meant that the coloniser was to protect and secure the well-being of its colonial subjects. Thus, the Blue Book utilised diplomatic treaties as a way of legally justifying the takeover of Germany's colonies.¹³³ Moreover, this reveals that humanitarian ideals were influential on how colonialism was perceived and revisited in 1918, indicating a trajectory from Berlin to Versailles.¹³⁴

According to the Blue Book, the indigenous population had been decimated by 92,258 people during German colonial rule. It projects this exact figure by comparing a census from 1877 to one from 1904 and then to one from 1911.¹³⁵ Such figures were used to showcase the degree of barbarism displayed by German colonialism. However, these numbers were, of course, influenced by the subjective interests of its authors. The estimations provided by the Blue Book (and for that matter, many other scholars giving figures to the overall death toll of the genocide) fail to take various aspects into account, such

¹²⁹ Administrator's Office, 'Report on the Natives', 17-18.

¹³⁰ Louis, *Germany's Lost Colonies*, 99.

¹³¹ Kössler, 'Sjambok or Cane?', 708.

¹³² Clifford, *German Colonies*, 67.

¹³³ Administrator's Office, 'Report on the Natives', 33 and Schildknecht, *Bismarck, Sudwestafrika*, 288; 308.

¹³⁴ Louis indicates that the Berlin Treaty was in fact fundamental for the later mandates system. See *Germany's Lost Colonies*, 103-4.

¹³⁵ Administrator's Office, 'Report on the Natives', 61-62. Also in TNA: FO 373/6: German South-West Africa, Foreign Office Handbook, March 1919.

as the rinderpest (cattle plague) epidemic which swept across Eastern and Southern Africa from the late 1890s and had a severe impact in both Southern Rhodesia and GSWA.¹³⁶ One historian who has attempted to gauge the accuracy of the census is Werner Hillebrecht, who suggests that the estimations given in the Blue Book are exaggerated.¹³⁷ It therefore seems plausible that the Blue Book presents such exact figures as part of a diplomatic argument which was intended to convince its readers of the intrinsic cruelty of German colonialism.

This was echoed by, for instance, Foreign Secretary George Curzon, who, in a speech to Parliament on the future of Germany's colonies, echoed the rationale of the Blue Book as he proclaimed that 'the 13-14 million dark-skinned men could not be abandoned.'¹³⁸ The atrocities portrayed by the Blue Book were, as Frank Bösch has shown, important in constructing the image of the 'brutal German' which has clearly 'impacted on Germany's reputation well after 1918.'¹³⁹ Yet, its purpose remained rather short-sighted, as the Blue Book reports were destroyed in 1926 in order to accommodate German settlers in SWA so that they would integrate into the Union of South Africa more easily.¹⁴⁰ As such, the purpose of the Blue Book becomes clear, as it was intended purely for the strategic interests at Versailles, and after this agenda had been achieved, the Blue Book was only an obstacle to Anglo-German rapprochement, both in South Africa and in Europe. Indeed, the German government occasionally complained when a Blue Book report was found in circulation or referred to in publications. The post-Versailles use and view of the Blue Book was therefore that it was unnecessary, problematic and even false. A group of Oxford Commonwealth scholars in the late 1930s found the report to be a piece of propaganda and referred to it as 'the colonial guilt lie.' In fact, this group even considered whether Germany's old colonies could be used by Britain in her appeasement policy towards the Third Reich, but eventually deemed it impractical and concluded that it 'would do very little to hinder the potentialities of discord in Europe.'¹⁴¹ Clearly, the purpose of the Blue Book was limited to the immediate aftermath of the First World War and no more.

¹³⁶ BL: 08157.f.8, Deutsche Reichskolonialamt, *The Treatment of Native and other Populations in the Colonial Possessions of Germany and England: an answer to the English Blue Book of August 1918* (Berlin, 1919), 43.

¹³⁷ Werner Hillebrecht, "Certain Uncertainties" or Venturing Progressively into Colonial Apologetics?, *Journal of Namibian Studies*, 1 (2014), 82-83.

¹³⁸ Hansard Millbank, vol.35 cc164: Debate in House of Lords on 'The Treaty of Peace', 3 July 1919.

¹³⁹ Frank Bösch, "'Are we a cruel nation?'" Colonial Practices, Perceptions and Scandals' in Dominik Geppert and Robert Gerwarth (eds.), *Wilhelmine Germany and Edwardian Britain: Essays on Cultural Affinity* (Oxford, 2008), 139-40.

¹⁴⁰ Jan-Bart Gewald, 'Imperial Germany and the Herero of Southern Africa: Genocide and the Quest for Recompense' in Adam Jones (ed.), *Genocide, War Crimes and the West: History and Complicity* (London, 2004), 65.

¹⁴¹ Bodleian Library, 100.48.s.4, Oxford University British Commonwealth Group, Report on the Problem of the ex-German Colonies, by A Sub-Group, RW.T. Cowan (Australia and New College), H. B. Mayo, Newfoundland and New College and E.P. Haslam, New Zealand and Balliol, October 1937, 8-11.

The German delegation at Versailles did not consider the colonial question to be as important as other more pressing matters. Nevertheless, they responded to the critique of the colonial ventures and sought to re-establish their image as a benign colonial power, as had existed before the war. It was argued that since the colonies were so costly and had little economic prospect, Germany only retained them for civilisational purposes and for ‘surplus population.’ Furthermore, they claimed that Germany had stood by international law by eradicating the slave trade, and therefore, ‘stripping Germany of its colonies is unjustifiable.’¹⁴² In order to attempt to restore the public image, the Germans countered the Blue Book by publishing the fittingly named White Book, which attempted to show that violence and maladministration were not unique to German colonialism, as the British Empire had also seen similar events occur through its long history.¹⁴³

The White Book is structured in three parts. It first shows how British and American opinion on German colonialism before the war was positive. In the second part, the Blue Book and its evidence are questioned and criticised, and finally, in the third part, the White Book addresses British colonial excesses in, among others, Africa, India and Australia. The main purpose of the White Book was not so much to refute the claims of excesses in GSWA as it was to point to British hypocrisy and moralism.

If these English moralists be held to the postulate they have set up, the inexorable conclusion must be drawn, by virtue of their own arguments, that England has irretrievably lost all right to the possession of any colonial land whatsoever.¹⁴⁴

The argument of the White Book rests upon the rationale of British allegations in the Blue Book as being made in the context of the war, highlighting the circumstances of the evidence and finally reiterating that Britain was in no position to deem Germany an unfit colonial power given its own record of excesses. In Britain, the CO found that the White Book was cleverly put together and would be hard to disprove. In the White Book, indigenous resistance was represented as an intrinsic and unavoidable part of colonialism in general and could therefore not be differentiated according to each colonial power. Indeed, the 1896 Ndebele rebellion was highlighted to illustrate that exact point, in that it was alleged to bear striking similarities to the war in GSWA:

¹⁴² TNA: German Foreign Ministry 33/2077: Telegram für Prime Minister of France, Georges Clemenceau, 28 May 1919, 72-75.

¹⁴³ BL 08157.f.8, Deutsche Reichskolonialamt, *The Treatment of Native*, 5.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 148

The resistance of natives clashed with the penetration of the white man and all that this implies, as well as with the interest of colonial policy. The results were identical: secret preparations by the natives, a sudden attack upon the settlers, a great massacre and then – punishment.¹⁴⁵

Just as the Blue Book is a detailed, albeit subjective analysis of the genocide in GSWA, so is the White Book a contentious, yet illustrative study of British colonialism and the Ndebele rebellion of 1896 in Southern Rhodesia as a contemporary and similar event in which British warfare and systematic exploitation of the indigenous peoples is described as symptomatic of British colonialism. In criticising the moral superiority of the Blue Book, the authors of the White Book state ‘we have seen how relentlessly the Matabele were persecuted. We have seen how caverns into which they had fled were blown up with dynamite and smothered with sulphur-fumes regardless of whether there were women and children in them or not.’¹⁴⁶ In fact, the White Book proposes that German rule in GSWA was similar to British rule in Southern Rhodesia prior to the 1896 rebellion, suggesting that the nature of colonial rule in both places were crucial causalities behind the rebellions.¹⁴⁷ Although the malice and degree of violence perpetrated in GSWA was far worse than in Southern Rhodesia, the portrayals in the Blue and White Books both reveal that the colonial history of Anglo-German Southern Africa was one steeped in violence and oppression.

The purpose of the White Book was similar to that of the Blue Book: to gain support at Versailles and among the general public opinion to settle the colonial question in favour of Germany. However, unlike the Blue Book, the White Book was not primarily intended for the American delegation alone, but also for the neutral participants. In May 1919, a FO official was alarmed by the circulation of the White Book in Scandinavia and he feared that ‘this very opportune statement will have a considerable effect with regard to the German claim to the restoration of her colonies.’ Therefore, it was requested that the CO provide a review – a ‘reasonable criticism of this book (the White Book) setting the true perspective of the British fair administration of the Colonies and the German ruthlessness with regard to them.’ This, it was contended, could be published in the press of the neutral countries to prevent the ‘loud outcry in the neutral country about poor misused Germany’ that would come if they did not reply.¹⁴⁸ However, W.C Bottomley at the CO did not share such concerns, as the White Book was not considered to pose a threat to Britain’s policy vis-à-vis Germany’s colonies at Versailles.¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁵ Ibid., 50.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid., 63.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid., 53.

¹⁴⁸ TNA: CO 323/807: H.C. O’Neill, Foreign Office, to W.C. Bottomley, Colonial Office, 3 May 1919.

¹⁴⁹ TNA: CO 323/807: Bottomley to O’Neill, 27 May 1919.

In the end, the colonial question at Versailles established a view in which British colonialism was deemed morally and practically superior to German. Through the representations in the Blue and White books, the genocide in GSWA and the war in Southern Rhodesia were both presented as incidents typical of German and British colonialism respectively. However, their intentions were different: where that of the Blue Book was to justify the takeover of Germany's colonies, the White Book's intention was to counter this by highlighting other colonial excesses and thus gaining support from the neutral powers (and possibly Wilson) as it highlighted British hypocrisy. Considering the depictions of German and British colonialism in the Blue and White Books respectively, it remains clear that these events are intertwined through time and space and linked by that crucial moment in Versailles which decided the future of the colonial world. But it also shows that colonial rule and violence could purposefully be exhibited as part of a diplomatic manoeuvre. Therefore, this invites us to ascertain two things: first, to consider the premises of these reports as discussed here in this chapter, and second, to juxtapose and test these depictions of colonial rule and violence with the way in which the same actors perceived the same events while they were unfolding. This will allow us to gauge the connection between theory and practice in that such perceptions will be revealed in different lights where various sets of moralities and realpolitik circumstances swayed the convictions that constructed perceptions and responses to each case. First, however, it is important to examine the nature of these ideological convictions and moralities.

Humanitarianism and the Civilising Mission

Humanitarianism is an important issue to discuss here, as it formulated a core ideology of Empire. It was a political force that directly influenced policy-making through, for instance, lobby groups such as the APS, but it also constructed a utopian ideal about colonial rule and the purpose of imperialism. As convincingly argued by Alan Lester and Fae Dussart, one of the more prevalent 'ideologies' when it came to the moral and legal basis of colonialism was the humanitarianism which stemmed from the anti-slavery debates of the early nineteenth century, which became a widespread and powerful discourse that affected imperialism and colonial rule altogether.¹⁵⁰ Humanitarianism often worked through central groups such as the

¹⁵⁰ Alan Lester and Fae Dussart, *Colonization and the Origins of Humanitarian Governance – Protecting Aborigines across the Nineteenth-Century British Empire* (Cambridge, 2014), 3-5.

APS to influence policy-making.¹⁵¹ Where the humanitarian groups of the early part of the century campaigned for abolitionism, such agenda was different in the latter part of the century. From 1870, the ideology of ‘protection’ of indigenous peoples from not only indigenous slavery and slave trade but also European colonial excesses became prevalent:

Between 1870 and 1914, British humanitarianism came to adopt the goals of the Aborigines’ Protection Society. With the slave trade and slavery both declining, abolitionists considered more the consequences of emancipation and the development of what have since been named ‘new forms of slavery’.¹⁵²

These new forms of slavery certainly adhere to the case studies of this thesis where concentration camps and forced labour were central points of concern for the British officials and humanitarian groups in London. There were various reasons for this. Personal convictions of how colonial rule should operate certainly had a strong place among the various officials, but as Suzanne Miers has argued, on an institutional level, ‘abolition and the legal status of slavery’ were ‘blessed words’ in the CO because it was so popular in the public opinion and thus accusations of slavery carried significant weight.¹⁵³ This was because since the 1840s, humanitarianism and anti-slavery had become ‘a vital component of Britain’s national and imperial identity.’¹⁵⁴ Not only was the British public genuinely concerned and interested in humanitarianism and the eradication of slavery and the slave trade, they were also concerned about the reputation of the British Empire.¹⁵⁵ As Fred Cooper has argued, the general conviction was that any incident of slavery would be considered a stain on the British flag.¹⁵⁶ Thus, it is reasonable to assume that humanitarianism was a forceful factor which shaped the official mind in its decision and policy-making because of the popularity amongst its peers and because it adhered to convictions of the officials themselves. Thereby humanitarianism became an ideology upon which perceptions and views of colonial rule were created.

¹⁵¹ Andrew Porter, ‘Trusteeship, Anti-Slavery and Humanitarianism’ in Porter (ed.), *The Oxford History of the British Empire: The Nineteenth Century* (Oxford, 1999), 216-17. See also Lester and Dussart, *Colonization and the Origins of Humanitarian Governance*, 2. For a detailed account of the APS and its influence upon British colonial policy as a whole, see James Heartfield, *The Aborigines’ Protection Society, Humanitarian Imperialism in Australia, New Zealand, Fiji, Canada, South Africa, and the Congo, 1836-1909* (London, 2011).

¹⁵² Porter, ‘Trusteeship, Anti-Slavery and Humanitarianism’, 216.

¹⁵³ Suzanne Miers, *Slavery in the Twentieth Century – The Evolution of a Global Problem* (Walnut Creek CA, 2003), 38. See also Esme Cleall, “‘In Defiance of the Highest Principle of Justice, Principles of Righteousness’: The Indenturing of the Bechuana Rebels and the Ideals of Empire, 1897-1900”, *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 40, 4 (2012), 605.

¹⁵⁴ Porter, ‘Trusteeship, Anti-Slavery and Humanitarianism’, 198.

¹⁵⁵ Bösch, “‘Are we a cruel nation?’”, 128.

¹⁵⁶ Frederick Cooper, ‘Conditions analogous to Slavery: Imperialism and Free Labor Ideology in Africa’ in Frederick Cooper, Thomas Holst and Rebecca Scott (eds.), *Beyond Slavery: Explorations of Race, Labour and Citizenship in Postemancipation Societies* (Chapel Hill, 2000), 117.

Humanitarianism, however, also revealed the contradictory premises of empire: how Britain as a relatively developed democracy at the time, expressing ideals of liberty, still conquered and subjugated a significant proportion of the planet while imposing coercion and oppression. This contradiction has been exposed by, among others, Martin Wiener, who has shown how law, as a key component of the British Empire, on the one hand sought to subjugate the colonised judicially and on the other facilitated criticism of empire by putting it 'on trial'. This contradiction was thus at the crux of the very self-awareness of empire itself and was, as shown, carried on into the creation of the mandates system where the Permanent Mandate Commission put the mandatory powers 'on trial'. Empire was thus a collision between the spread of British ideals of liberty and humanitarianism and the authoritarian nature of imperial rule.¹⁵⁷ In other words, the ideology lending legitimacy to imperialism was at odds with the nature of imperialism itself.

Perhaps the most crucial aspect of humanitarianism and empire was the civilising mission, which, according to Osterhammel, can best be understood as follows:

A special kind of belief with, sometimes practical consequences. It includes the self-proclaimed right and duty to propagate and actively introduce one's own norms and institutions to other peoples and societies, based upon a firm conviction of the inherent superiority and higher legitimacy of one's own collective way of life.¹⁵⁸

Furthermore, the civilising mission transcends the boundaries of direct colonial rule and that 'the civiliser' deeply believes that the imperial practices are generous and benign.¹⁵⁹ As Alice Conklin has shown in the case of French West Africa, the apparent contradiction of a 'civilising empire' was resolved through a transformation in which coercion and oppression became a civilising force. Coercion actively 'improved' the colonial subjects and prevented them from 'degenerating' back into their supposedly savage state.¹⁶⁰ The civilising mission was therefore an integral tool which deeply influenced and legitimised colonial administration, but also coercion.¹⁶¹ This meant that humanitarian convictions of empire as formulated in the 'civilising mission' were not merely a critic of empire, but also an agent of

¹⁵⁷ Martin Wiener, *An Empire on Trial: Race, Murder, and Justice under British Rule, 1870–1935* (Cambridge, 2009), 4–5.

¹⁵⁸ Jürgen Osterhammel, 'Europe, the "West" and the Civilizing Mission', The German Historical Institute London, Annual Lecture 2005, 8.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid., 29–31.

¹⁶⁰ Alice Conklin, 'Colonialism and Human Rights, A Contradiction in Terms? The Case of France and West Africa, 1895–1914', *American Historical Review*, 103 (1998), 437–8. See also Alice Conklin, *A Mission to Civilize: The Republican Idea of Empire in France and West Africa, 1895–1930* (Stanford, 1997) for a French case in which a consensus on the civilising mission legitimised imperialism.

¹⁶¹ Conklin, 'Colonialism and Human Rights', 439–40.

empire. In the field, it was necessary to spread ‘civilisation’ and to subjugate the world in order to bring about civilised rule and save, in this case, the Africans from the alleged savagery. This rested upon a notion of the Africans as being savage, inferior and weak. When complemented by the burgeoning scientific racialism of the day, these suppositions were only confirmed by those sceptics who had been disappointed in the unwillingness of the ‘savages’ to accept the gifts of civilisation.

Harald Fischer-Tiné and Michael Mann have contended that the civilising mission was far more than a mere justification of empire: it was an ideology.¹⁶² In focus is the meaning of the civilising mission as the ‘moral and material progress’ and the ‘improvement’ or ‘betterment’ of the world. This sustained a responsibility that legitimised an assumed mastery of the world, which shone through in colonial rule.¹⁶³ Ordained suppositions of the Africans as being weak formulated a practical tool of colonial rule. For instance, the so-called repugnancy clause empowered the colonial officer in Africa to determine whether a customary practice of the indigenous peoples was contrary to Western morality as a means of social control to maintain authority.¹⁶⁴ As Bonny Ibhawoh suggests, the traditional laws and customs of indigenous peoples within the British Empire were permitted as long as they were not ‘repugnant’ to British morality.¹⁶⁵ This was effectuated through various implementations such as education, where the ideals of the civilising mission acted as an active promulgation of social control, as it intended to alter the identity of the Africans to make them more appreciative and ‘good’ subjects.¹⁶⁶

Instruments such as the repugnancy clause derived from a humanitarian constructed perception of moral responsibility for the coloniser. This arose from what Andrew Porter terms ‘trusteeship’, which originated with Edmund Burke’s critique of the East India Company in the 1780s. It merged with humanitarian critique of colonial rule and the anti-slavery debates, and, combined with the advent of Christian missioning, it formulated a powerful morality of empire in which the coloniser was *responsible* for the welfare of the colonised.¹⁶⁷ As has already been shown, this was a fundamental premise of the mandates to

¹⁶² Michael Mann, “‘Torchbearers Upon the Path of Progress’: Britain’s Ideology of a Moral and Material Progress in India. An Introductory Essay” in Harald Fischer-Tiné and Michael Mann (eds.), *Colonialism as Civilizing Mission: Cultural Ideology in British India* (London, 2004), 2.

¹⁶³ Ibid., 4-5.

¹⁶⁴ Onek Adyanga, *Modes of British Imperial Control of Africa: A Case Study of Uganda c. 1890-1990* (Newcastle upon Tyne, 2011), 4-5.

¹⁶⁵ Bonny Ibhawoh, *Imperial Justice: Africans in Empire’s Court* (Oxford, 2013), 56-7.

¹⁶⁶ Adyanga, *British Imperial Control*, 6-8.

¹⁶⁷ Porter, “Trusteeship, Anti-Slavery and Humanitarianism”, 199-201. Porter also highlights a dichotomy within trusteeship where Burke’s version was to conserve the colonies via laws, another, Charles Grant, emphasised the religious duty to civilise and ‘improve’ the situation of the indigenous peoples.

be held in 'sacred trust' in the Treaty of Versailles. But more importantly, the idea of humanitarian responsibility was brought into effect through the many treaties in the late nineteenth century, where the European powers carved out the African continent amongst themselves. In particular, the Berlin Treaty echoed the notion of trusteeship in its rhetoric of humanitarianism, anti-slavery and enlightenment to be brought to the supposedly backward Africans.

It therefore became both the moral and legal obligation of the European colonial powers at the end of the nineteenth century to save the Africans and to examine each other's practices.¹⁶⁸ The European colonial powers therefore legally obligated one another to adhere to humanitarian rules and norms, thus indicating a contemporary morality in which colonial rule was to be contained. However, while treaties such as that of Berlin and later Brussels echoed humanitarian values, the reality in the colonies was very different. Nonetheless, it serves as a framework in which colonial rule in Africa was perceived by the governments and officials in Europe: in other words, how they considered colonial rule ought to be. This is important for this thesis, as it provides a legalistic and moral platform upon which colonial rule in Southern Rhodesia and GSWA were understood and scrutinised both at the time and at Versailles. Indeed, as we shall see, this moral responsibility was brought to the fore by the British officials in various aspects in, among others, diplomatic and political contexts.

In more practical terms, this moral responsibility formulated other instruments of imperialism such as the idea of the 'protectorate', which differentiated from annexation of the African territories. Where annexation was 'the direct assumption of territorial rights to maintain the paramount authority', a protectorate was 'the recognition of the right of the aboriginal or other actual inhabitants in their own country'.¹⁶⁹ Thus, humanitarianism found its way to becoming an active agent and instrument for colonial diplomacy, which was helpful in carving out the African continent between the European powers. Indeed, besides the moral humanitarianism voiced in the Berlin Treaty that laid the ground rules for the ensuing scramble for Africa, certain practical guidelines were also included. Although the continent had ostensibly been carved out in Bismarck's Berlin villa, colonial rule was not formalised before said territory had seen an 'effective occupation'.¹⁷⁰ This could be done by sending expeditionary forces, granting a charter to sub-imperial entities such as the BSAC or granting 'protection' to African chiefs. Through this manoeuvre, the colonial powers could, according

¹⁶⁸ Cooper, 'Conditions analogous to Slavery', 129.

¹⁶⁹ TNA: FO 403/49: Western African Conference, Correspondence, January 1885 No. 60 Sir T. Twiss to Sir J. Pauncefote, 10 January 1885.

¹⁷⁰ H.L Wesseling, *Divide and Rule: The Partition of Africa 1880-1914*, translated by Arnold Pomerans (Westport CT, 1995), 128.

to the international laws agreed among themselves, legitimately lay claim to huge swathes of land, and it was an efficient means of acquiring the otherwise uncontrollable interiors. Indeed, both GSWA and neighbouring Bechuanaland were technically protectorates, or *Schutzgebiet*, for Germany and Britain respectively.

Christopher Leslie Brown has examined how humanitarian beliefs became action at times under the etiquette of humanitarian intervention, by studying the anti-slavery movements of the early nineteenth century. Through accumulating what he calls ‘moral capital’ – a resource similar to economic, social or cultural capital – certain actors gained increasing influence and power.¹⁷¹ However, the inclusion of humanitarianism into policy-making and imperial expansion also had its costs. It rendered the powers in question responsible for those same moral values and a violation hereof could have significant ramifications, as displayed not only at Versailles but also prior to the war. One crucial event that drove the humanitarian conviction to its zenith was the Congo crisis. The Congo crisis is important because it is situated around the same time as the two case studies and had severe consequences not only for the Congo Free State but also for King Leopold II of Belgium and most importantly for the British government. The horror regime of the Congo Free State is by now well-known and has sparked many historical accounts.¹⁷² The concession companies that were extracting rubber did so through a regime of violence in order to meet financial expectations and demands, which resulted in cases of hands being chopped off, people being left to starve and whole villages being burned.¹⁷³

Upon visiting the Congo Free State, British consul Roger Casement compiled a report which disclosed these atrocities to the FO.¹⁷⁴ Upon his return to Britain, Casement campaigned against the regime with the help of philanthropic groups such as the APS and, most importantly, from E.D Morel, with whom the CRM was created.¹⁷⁵ Throughout the first decade of the twentieth century, Casement and Morel were incredibly successful in captivating and mobilising the public and pressuring the British government to action.¹⁷⁶ At the same time, characters sympathetic to the cause, such as Foreign Secretary Edward Grey

¹⁷¹ Christopher L Brown, *Moral Capital: Foundations of British Abolitionism* (Durham, 2006), 457.

¹⁷² See, for instance, Adam Hochschild, *King Leopold's Ghosts. A Story Greed, Terror and Heroism in Colonial Africa* (New York, 1999).

¹⁷³ Robert Harms, ‘The End of Red Rubber: A Reassessment’, *The Journal of African History*, 16, 1 (1975), 75–76.

¹⁷⁴ Dominik Schaller, ‘Genocide and Mass Violence in the ‘Heart of Darkness’: Africa in The Colonial Period’ in Donal Bloxham and Dirk Moses (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Genocide Studies* (Oxford, 2010), 11.

¹⁷⁵ Dean Pavlakis, *British Humanitarianism and the Congo Reform Movement, 1896-1913* (Farnham, 2015), 64-65.

¹⁷⁶ Wm. Roger Louis, ‘The Triumph of the Congo Reform Movement, 1905-1908’ in Jeffrey Butler (ed.), *Boston University Papers on Africa*, Vol. II (Boston, 1966), 270-71.

and later Prime Minister Charles Dilke, ascended and became prominent advocates in parliament.¹⁷⁷ Furthermore, the aforementioned legal obligation of international treaties were alluded to by, for instance, Henry Fox Bourne of the APS, who advocated for a British intervention in ‘the Congo crisis’ based on the Congo Free State’s violation of the Berlin Treaty.¹⁷⁸ As Dean Pavlakis has argued, the CRM replenished British society’s moral capital in much the same vein as the anti-slavery campaigns over a century before.¹⁷⁹ The pressure upon the FO was then twofold: on the one hand, popular opinion demanded action, and on the other, the legal obligation of the Berlin Treaty had rendered the Congo Free State illegitimate. However, a re-opening of the Congo question was against British interests at the time, as France and Germany were standing in the background ready to swoop in and claim the immensely valuable colony.¹⁸⁰ Eventually, the British government managed to negotiate a transfer of administration from Leopold’s personal company to the Belgian government, thereby avoiding a geopolitical worst-case scenario.¹⁸¹

The origin of public opinion in scandals and crises either derived from a top-down process where the masses were manipulated by elitist groups or from a bottom-up process, often comprising more spontaneous responses to certain events. But considering the broad network of which Whitehall was part, access to information on scandals and particularly unwanted events and reports could be screened. In other words, Whitehall was first to receive detailed information on various events in the colonies.¹⁸² As will be shown in this thesis, such information was key to how colonial scandals such as those in Southern Rhodesia and GSWA were perceived, managed and acted on. The intricate relationship between public opinion and colonial and foreign policy, where Whitehall was dependent on the former to attain the interests of the latter, was therefore a fundamental relationship in the actions taken by British officials at the time.¹⁸³ When it came to colonial conflicts and crises, it was a fragile situation where they were caught between appeasing the public and securing realpolitik interests. Therefore, the use of force in the colonies needed to be excused and rationalised by officials so that they had a backing, not only in the government and internationally, but also in relation

¹⁷⁷ Pavlakis, *British Humanitarianism*, 201-205.

¹⁷⁸ Wm Roger Louis, ‘Roger Casement and the Congo’, *The Journal of African History*, 5, 1 (1965), 100

¹⁷⁹ Pavlakis, *British Humanitarianism*, 5.

¹⁸⁰ Louis, ‘The Triumph of the Congo Reform Movement’, 295-96.

¹⁸¹ Louis, ‘Roger Casement and the Congo’, 119.

¹⁸² Jon Western, ‘Public Opinion and Humanitarian Intervention’ in Fabian Klose (ed.), *The Emergence of Humanitarian Intervention* (Cambridge, 2016), 167-68.

¹⁸³ *Ibid.*, 166.

to its public peers. The use of force, therefore, was often excused by the claim that it would prevent use of more excessive force in the future.¹⁸⁴

Certainly, the Congo crisis can be categorised as a colonial scandal, which Frank Bösch defines by three factors: ‘First, they violated norms; second these violations were made public and third they resulted in a widespread public outrage.’¹⁸⁵ Because of the consequences of the Congo crisis, where public pressure was so intense that it directed British foreign and colonial policy, the official mind was keen to avoid a repetition. The scepticism about colonial rule originating from a national and imperial identity of humanitarianism, grew exponentially during the Congo crisis and the British government experienced the potential ramifications of colonial excesses upon their policies.¹⁸⁶ The moral capital, therefore, was a force which could fundamentally stir and alter British imperial policy. It drew attention, facilitated and legitimised action and sustained the moral prestige of the actor(s) in question.¹⁸⁷ Therefore, since the governments were responsible for the treatment of the indigenous people both morally and judicially, as determined in several treaties, there was also direct pressure in terms of responsibility where the moral capital could be wielded against them. Scandals of colonial abuse and violence could lead to ‘dismissals and suicides, to the setting up of investigative committees, and the introduction of reforms’ and, most importantly, ‘the scandals that drew international attention discredited the moral claims of the colonial leadership.’¹⁸⁸ As a consequence, they could involve the European governments in serious diplomatic situations which disrupted the geopolitical stability (or at least perceived stability) in Europe itself. Therefore, the European colonial powers had little or no interest in showcasing colonial excesses, stories of exploitation, war and even genocide even when it was happening in a rival’s territory. This created a fundamental logic among the colonial powers where a shared *omerta* (the mafia vow of silence) pertaining to the colonies was established. The Congo crisis and the CRM’s successful campaigning and other scandals, such as the concentration camps in South Africa during the war in 1899-1902, only made British officials aware of, and concerned by, public attention to excessive violence in both British and non-British colonies. As Foreign Secretary Lord Lansdowne noted on the Congo atrocities in 1905, ‘Ghastly, but I am afraid the Belgians will get hold of the stories as to the way the natives have apparently been treated by men of our race in Australia.’¹⁸⁹ As recently observed by Amalia Forclaz,

¹⁸⁴ Anthony Kirk-Greene, *Britain’s Imperial Administrators, 1858-1966* (London, 2000), 278.

¹⁸⁵ Bösch, “‘Are we a cruel nation?’”, 116.

¹⁸⁶ Porter, ‘Trusteeship, Anti-Slavery and Humanitarianism’, 198.

¹⁸⁷ Brown, *Moral Capital*, 457.

¹⁸⁸ Bösch, “‘Are we a cruel nation?’”, 115-16.

¹⁸⁹ Louis, ‘The Triumph of the Congo Reform Movement’, 282.

colonial governments either encouraged or suppressed the circulation of evidence of scandals, particularly cases of slavery, depending on their political needs.¹⁹⁰ Therefore, breaking this *omerta* by circulating and exhibiting colonial scandals could also formulate a powerful instrument to attain various interests, as best illustrated by the Blue Book of 1918.

Racial ideologies and Scientific Racism

Racism remains a fundamental aspect in the history of the European empires. Broader prejudices of race at the time are important for this thesis in several ways. Not only is racism an important explanation of the exploitation and violence that occurred, but it is also a way to understand how British officials perceived those upon whom colonial rule and violence were imposed and inflicted. In other words, racial prejudices and racism can explain the nature of colonial rule and what happened in Southern Africa at the time, thus providing a crucial context for the cases. However, while the prejudices and ideas of race remain important, it is more the actual practices of racism and how these were perceived that will be examined in this thesis.

Racial prejudices and convictions rationalised colonialism and created a discursive framework in which the white colonial rulers were promoted as biologically and culturally superior, thereby justifying the right of the colonisers to rule. The racially deduced hierarchies that emerged in the colonial world were perhaps nowhere as explicit as in Southern Africa where the history of racism is often linked to the advent of apartheid in 1948 under which the indigenous peoples of both Southern Rhodesia and SWA became oppressed.¹⁹¹ Apartheid had roots in both colonial Southern Rhodesia and South Africa, but also in GSWA, as alluded by Senator Heinrich Vedder in 1956 when he claimed that apartheid had in fact been invented here by the German colonial administration.¹⁹² Indeed, the apartheid regime has influenced historians greatly and has taken a place as a key moment in Southern African history.¹⁹³ However, while this remains a central context, this thesis does not seek to address whether there were any continuities originating in either GSWA or Southern Rhodesia.

¹⁹⁰ Amalia Forclaz, *Humanitarian Imperialism: the politics of Anti-Slavery Activism, 1880-1940* (Oxford, 2015), 7.

¹⁹¹ SWA was under the governance of South Africa, but a parallel development was evident in Rhodesia. For apartheid, see Saul Dubow, *Apartheid, 1948-1994* (Oxford, 2014).

¹⁹² Werner Hillebrecht, "Certain Uncertainties", 77-78.

¹⁹³ Saul Dubow, *Scientific Racism in Modern South Africa* (Cambridge, 1995), 2.

Ideas and practices of race and racism are connected, but it remains crucial to distinguish them, as they represent different aspects of imperial history. Race is ‘the systematic expression and rationalisation of the idea of superiority and innate biological difference amongst distinct groups of human beings.’¹⁹⁴ Thus, race represents the *ideas* that may have influenced British officials, whereas racism was the practice and expression of these ideas. One of the key publications on the matter of race and racism is George Fredrickson’s *Racism, A Short History* (2002) which showcases how racism is situated in the various differentiations between human groups, such as religion, tribalism, culture, and particularly relevant here, biological determinism. But it is not until these differences are considered ‘innate, indelible, and unchangeable that racist attitude or ideology can be said to exist.’¹⁹⁵ However, racism, Frederickson argues, is more than a set of beliefs: ‘it also expresses itself in the practices, institutions, and structures that a sense of deep difference justifies or validates. Racism, therefore, is more than theorising about human differences.’ More precisely, he contends that the purpose of racism is that it ‘sustains or proposes to establish a racial order, a permanent group hierarchy that is believed to reflect the laws of nature or the decrees of God.’¹⁹⁶ Frederickson’s definition therefore sets a starting point in which racism and colonial rule can be said to combine. The violence inflicted upon the colonised, who were of course lamented as inferior due to their supposed racial grouping, may therefore be inflicted to either maintain or create this racial order. The nature and premises of racism, however, remain debated. For instance, Benjamin Isaacs argues that racism is ‘an attitude towards individuals and groups of people which posits a direct connection between physical and mental qualities.’¹⁹⁷ Conversely, Francisco Bethencourt has defined racism as being racial prejudice (or theory) paired with discriminatory action.¹⁹⁸ Crucial here is the aspect of *action*: an action can be physical in the shape of, for instance, violence, but it can also be policies or other means of oppression in which groups defined by racial presumptions are placed in a hierarchy which may be social, political or economic, for example.

It is also crucial to ascertain the place of racist prejudices and practices in the official mind and broader public culture at the period under scrutiny here. Saul Dubow has suggested that the popularisation of racial thought and the scientific racism of the day remains a complex matter which can be traced by ‘keywords’ in wider discourse to ascertain its impact

¹⁹⁴ Ibid., 5.

¹⁹⁵ George M Frederickson, *Racism: A Short History* (Princeton, 2002), 5.

¹⁹⁶ Ibid., 6.

¹⁹⁷ Benjamin Isaac, *The Invention of Racism in Classical Antiquity* (Princeton, 2006), 23.

¹⁹⁸ Francisco Bethencourt, *Racisms: From the Crusades to the Twentieth Century* (Princeton, 2014), 1.

and importance in society.¹⁹⁹ But racial thought and the interest in the matter may also be indicated via other aspects, such as the popularity of societies and groups, even those of the APS whose agenda rested on a racial disposition of ‘helping’ the lesser races. Given the simultaneous imperialist expansion at the end of the nineteenth century and the growing attention to Empire in general, one may assume that this correlated to the evolving significance of racist ideas and the growing popularity of scholarly, especially anthropological, societies. But racist prejudices and actions differentiated widely in the metropole and the colonial sphere, as the circumstances were different. In the colonies, the practices that were implemented to rule and govern the supposedly lesser races were of course steeped in prejudice and racial assumptions. But unlike the metropole, their main causation was to sustain the governance of a white minority rather than the various scholarly or moral implications of race. Thus, the aspect of *action* as implied by Bethencourt is imperative if we are to comprehend the relation between these methods of colonial rule and the racial discourse of the late nineteenth century.

Frederickson and Bethencourt, despite a disagreement on the origin and historical trajectory of race and racism, both address the emergence of ‘modern’ biological racism or racialism. Ever since Charles Darwin’s *The Origin of Species* (1859), which was followed up by his *Descent of Man* (1871), there had gradually during the nineteenth century been a prevailing tendency for the natural sciences to focus on race while the humanist and cultural considerations were increasingly set aside.²⁰⁰ Instead, a more rigid systematisation of nature was soon applied to humanity as categorised into different racial groupings, allowing humanity to be seen from a natural scientific rather than a humanist perspective.²⁰¹ In the late nineteenth century, the obsession of rationalism and science led to the rise of scientific disciplines that affected the social compositions of society in Europe and its colonies.

Perhaps the most renowned Darwinian term, ‘survival of the fittest’, as coined by Herbert Spencer, suggested a conflict between the biologically determined racial groups as the main premise of human evolution.²⁰² The Social Darwinism that derived from this remains an extensively studied and discussed theme in which racist principles were developed and were channelled into actual policies, comprehensions and actions, perhaps best

¹⁹⁹ Dubow, *Scientific Racism*, 8-9.

²⁰⁰ Bethencourt, *Racisms*, 275-76.

²⁰¹ Francisco Bethencourt, ‘Humankind: From Division to Recomposition’ in Fabian Klose and Mirjam Thulind (eds.), *Humanity, A History of European Concepts in Practice from the Sixteenth Century to the Present* (Göttingen, 2016), 43.

²⁰² George W. Stocking Jr., *Race, Culture and Evolution: Essays in the History of Anthropology* (Chicago, 1968), 241. See also Herbert Spencer, *Principles of Sociology*, Vol. II (London, 1902), 80a-80b.

illustrated by the growing popularity of eugenics. Eugenics was a merger between scientific and social approaches dedicated to the improvement of society and sought to introduce active policies for the ‘selective breeding’ of specific groups, races and social classes.²⁰³ Another example that was perhaps more pertinent to the colonial world was the preoccupation with understanding the ‘native mind’, which remained a key aim for Social Darwinists to develop strategies of effective colonial rule over the alleged savages. This helped to rationalise and explain colonial rule and the state of colonial subjects and reinforced the notion of the child-like African in need of help, as inferred in the paternalism of the civilising mission.²⁰⁴

At the time, these various interpretations and needs for racial examination led to the development of what Bethencourt calls ‘scientific racialism’, where the differences between racial groups became increasingly seen as innate and stable. These perceptions had developed from the changes in both natural sciences and the political landscape of the mid-nineteenth century – where nationalism, in particular, had become prevalent – which created a development in the general study and perception of race and presented a turning point where scientific inquiry ‘became much more assertive, ideologically aggressive, and politically engaged.’²⁰⁵ Racial categorizations can be traced back to, for instance, Carl Linnaeus (1707-1778), who connected racial groupings according to continents, or Georges Cuvier (1769-1832), who identified three distinct races of mankind, mainly determined by using craniometric measurements. In Britain, the advent of a deterministic scientific racialism is perhaps best characterised by Scottish anatomist Robert Knox, who famously proclaimed that ‘race is everything: literature, science, art – in a word, civilisation depends on it.’²⁰⁶

To keep the focus on the official mind of the British government, it is important to emphasise British strands and traditions of racialism and, for the sake of context, how they differentiated from German traditions. The case of GSWA has often been linked to the principles of scientific racism in Germany and beyond, prompting further assumptions of its links to the Holocaust.²⁰⁷ The emerging German tradition spearheaded by prominent figures

²⁰³ Frank Dikötter, ‘Race Culture: Recent Perspectives on the History of Eugenics’, *The American Historical Review*, 103, 2 (1998), 476.

²⁰⁴ Dubow, *Scientific Racism*, 209.

²⁰⁵ Bethencourt, *Racism*, 270.

²⁰⁶ Douglas Lorimer, ‘Race, Science and Culture: Historical Continuities and Discontinuities, 1850-1914’ in Shearer West (ed.), *The Victorians and Race* (London, 1996), 15.

²⁰⁷ Ute Dieckmann, “‘Hai//kom zwischen Buschmannplage’ und San Aktivismus: Koloniale Repräsentationen und postkoloniale Aneignung von Ethnizität im Namibia des 20. Jahrhunderts’, *Basler Afrika Bibliographien*, Working Paper, 2 (2006), 8.

such as Rudolf Virchow saw a more rigid and deterministic perception of race. Here Darwinism was initially rejected as *Affenlehre* (monkey doctrine), meaning that Africans were often not considered part of the human species, but were regarded as being somewhere between human and animal.²⁰⁸ Accordingly, there was a clear distinction between the *Kulturvolker* and the *Naturvolker*: the ‘cultural’ and ‘natural’ peoples. This meant that a humanist approach was impossible, hence paving the way for a more rigid and biologically determined approach to emerge wherein polygenetic principles, which suggest several disconnected evolutionary processes, became popular amongst anthropologists. One of the more vivid examples thereof was the contention that the evolutionary trajectory of the Polynesians derived from worms rather than from apes.²⁰⁹ Regarding the colonial world, the issue of *Entmischung* (racial de-mixing) captivated German racialists such as the eugenicist Eugen Fischer, who conducted field work among the mixed-raced Baster tribe in GSWA to prove Mendelian inheritance and race-mixing as the main reason for ‘racial degeneration’.²¹⁰ The perception of race in Germany, therefore, was rigid and deterministic in nature, and, as will be shown, translated into colonial policies and practices.

Concerning racial policies, however, one of the most influential figures in Germany was British-born biologist Houston Chamberlain, who promoted the Teutonic Race as the fairest and noblest of all through history alongside the Anglo-Saxons. For Chamberlain, it was important to actively wage the racial struggle, because if it was ‘not waged with cannonballs, it goes silently in the heart of society’ through various interchanges between the races, including marriages. This, Chamberlain warned, was ‘a struggle for life and death.’²¹¹ Important to note, however, is that the increasingly deterministic racialism in both Britain and Germany was also a matter of critique by many scientists and scholars. For instance, Franz Boas actively criticised scientific racialism, especially eugenics, as he contended that it was impossible to completely rationalise human life because of the existence of emotions and a soul.²¹²

In Britain, the development of race in the metropole was somewhat different because of the longer colonial history of the British Empire. Catherine Hall has suggested that the anti-slavery positivism of the first half of the nineteenth century was soon replaced by scepticism, and the growing influence of racist key figures such as Knox and Thomas Carlyle

²⁰⁸ Paul Weindling, *Health, Race and German Politics between National Unification and Nazism, 1870-1945* (Cambridge 1989), 55-56.

²⁰⁹ Andrew Zimmerman, *Anthropology and Antihumanism in Imperial Germany* (Chicago, 2001), 68.

²¹⁰ Eugen Fischer, *Die Rehobother Bastards und das Bastardierungsproblem beim Menschen* (Jena, 1913), 135-6.

²¹¹ Houston Chamberlain, *The Foundations of the Nineteenth Century*, Vol. II, [orig. 1899], translated by John Lees (New York, 1911), 578.

²¹² Franz Boas, ‘Eugenics’, *The Scientific Monthly*, 3, 5 (1916), 475.

saw racist ideas becoming increasingly influential and prominent in British society. This was paired with the events in the empire where the resistance of Indians and Jamaicans generated a backlash against the civilising ideals. The violence of the rebels in the Indian rebellion (1857) and the Morant Bay rebellion (1865) was a sign of their racial degeneration and barbarism and ended the anti-slavery positivism that had hoped to civilise and ‘improve’ the supposedly lesser races.²¹³ This ‘disillusionment’, exhibited at Morant Bay and elsewhere, paved the way for a ‘hardening’ of racial attitudes which saw the emergence of a more rigid and deterministic scientific racism.²¹⁴ Yet, as Peter Mandler and Douglas Lorimer have pointed out, nineteenth-century Britain was not exclusively about race and there may be a tendency to inflate its role and importance, which, in Lorimer’s opinion, means that the Victorians are being historically generalised.²¹⁵ Indeed, the radical scientific racialism as promoted by, for instance, Knox, was accordingly not the mainstream conviction about race. But more importantly, we cannot discard the continued influence of anti-slavery and humanitarianism in the metropolitan perception of race and colonial rule in particular. Unlike the German tradition, in Britain, the racial discourse in the late nineteenth century was entangled into the humanitarian discourse and rhetoric of anti-slavery where the African was considered barbaric and inferior, but still part of the human race.²¹⁶ The humanitarian sentiment of the anti-slavery movement should therefore not be seen as an ‘interlude’ in the history of racism, as it sustained the imagination of Africans as being child-like, in need of help and civilisation. Indeed, while the growth of scientific racialism from the mid-nineteenth century became increasingly influential in the perception of indigenous peoples, it never completely displaced the humanitarian beliefs manifested in the anti-slavery debates.²¹⁷

Indicative of how these beliefs penetrated scientific racialism was one of the most important anthropologists of the time, Edward Tylor (1832-1917). According to Tylor, the various races of the world had the same fundamental principles and the same capability to develop in three stages: savagery, barbarism and civilisation.²¹⁸ Tylor believed that ‘the white man’, while being intellectually superior, did not have monopoly on this progress.²¹⁹ This enabled a possible venue for racial development in which the civilising mission could

²¹³ Hall, *Civilizing Subjects*, 12.

²¹⁴ Hyam, *Britain’s Imperial Century*, 155.

²¹⁵ Peter Mandler, ‘The Problem with Cultural History’, *Cultural and Social History*, 1, 1 (2004), 98 and Lorimer, ‘Race, Science and Culture’, 12-13.

²¹⁶ Seymour Drescher, ‘The Ending of Slave Trade and the Evolution of European Scientific Racism’, *Social Science History*, 14, 3 (1990), 417.

²¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 443.

²¹⁸ Edward B Tylor, *Anthropology: An Introduction to the study of man and civilization* (London, 1881), 24.

²¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 74-75.

effectively promote the supposedly inferior races and was thus a revival of humanitarian principles within the prism of racist practices and perceptions – especially those concerning the issue of ‘native labour’, as physical and hard work could be ‘educative’ and thus develop the supposedly inferior races.

In a colonial context, Benjamin Kidd argued that the ‘race question’, which equated to racial struggle, was based on the process of natural selection where ‘less developed races’ were bound to become extinct by laws of nature.²²⁰ Crucial to their survival was what Kidd termed ‘social efficiency’, which was the ability to organise and control natural instincts to the benefit of a community, which remained deeply connected to spirituality and civilisation.²²¹ Not surprisingly, the European races were according to Kidd the best at ‘social efficiency’ and were therefore championing the racial struggle. Yet, Kidd still argued that the human races were all part of a ‘single, vast, orderly process of evolution.’²²² The views on colonial rule expressed by Kidd therefore still perceived the indigenous peoples as part of the colonial project. In contrast, German scholars such as Paul Rohrbach contended that areas such as Southern Africa were to be settled by the white race ‘without any involvement of the natives.’²²³

Kidd reveals how the idea of ‘survival of the fittest’ was recycled in scholarly work concerning the colonialism where the rule of the European powers should be dependent on biological and climatic factors. In the tropical colonies, rule should be a simple administration aimed to extract natural resources which would otherwise be lost due to the indigenous lack of ‘social efficiency.’ In the temperate places, however, the Europeans should more forcefully take control and settle, as these zones were more suited to their biological composition.²²⁴ Thus, Kidd proposed a version of racialism that adhered to economic interests in the colonies. In Southern Africa, the mining industry and its insatiable demand for cheap labour were particularly an economic determinant in the definition of racism in this region and had significant socio-economic ramifications that are still evident today.²²⁵ This was, of course, similar to Rohrbach’s view, but in Kidd’s vision, the Africans still played a central role, although he might well have been convinced of their gradual and natural extinction. Social Darwinist opinions such as those of Kidd and Rohrbach therefore neatly translated into effective models of social policy and by extension presented different venues for the

²²⁰ Benjamin Kidd, *Social Evolution* (London, 1894), 277.

²²¹ Ibid., 287.

²²² Ibid., 292.

²²³ Paul Rohrbach, *Deutsche Kolonialwirtschaft – Kulturpolitische Grundsätze für die Rassen- und Missionsfragen* (Berlin, 1909), 1.

²²⁴ Benjamin Kidd, *Control of the Tropics* (London, 1898), 48-49.

²²⁵ Adrian Guelke, *Rethinking the Rise and Fall of Apartheid* (London, 2005), 24.

execution and implementation of colonial rule. Furthermore, the racial discourse in London and Southern Africa at the time was assumedly a key factor for these officials when constructing their perceptions and responses to how colonial rule should function and the basis upon which colonial violence was perpetrated.²²⁶

In the colonies themselves, scientific racist principles interacted with practical interests and circumstances. Indeed, the *action* that changed conceptualization of race into racism was part of political projects which were often derived from more practical and economic interests.²²⁷ As Bernard Magubane has argued, racism was far from a mere theoretical and rhetorical justification of violence: it also had roots in the material and economic exploitation of Africans.²²⁸ Similarly, Bethencourt argues that racism as prejudice paired with action was motivated and effectuated by political projects in which a struggle for control and monopoly over resources played a crucial role.²²⁹ As will be shown in both case studies, the economic incentive behind racist policies collided with humanitarian principles as officials in the colony disagreed with those in the metropole over the place and governing of Africans: were they to be an exploited but useful resource in building a healthy colony? Or were they to be saved from the sins of slavery? Ostensibly, the former applied to the interests of the colonial officer and the latter to that of the metropole. This dichotomy is imperative to the understanding of how the official mind perceived colonial rule because the stakes and pressure-points were widely different in each setting. If we focus on Southern Africa, the ‘native question’, especially in connection to labour issues, was according to several British officials at the time the most pressing issue for the colonial state and the British government.²³⁰ Indeed, while the ‘poor whites’ were considered to be the pressing concern in metropolitan Britain for which eugenics was the answer, the pressing matter in Southern Africa, from a racist perspective, was the Africans.²³¹ The settlers were grouped in ‘islands of white’, aware of their lesser numbers, and thus sought to maintain the social hierarchy and oppress the indigenous peoples through violent racist regimes.

²²⁶ Scott Cook, *Colonial Encounters in the Age of High Imperialism* (London, 1995), 5.

²²⁷ Bethencourt, *Racisms*, 1-2.

²²⁸ Bernard Magubane, *Race and the Construction of the Dispensable Other* (Pretoria, 2007). See also Robert Ross, *Beyond the Pale: essays on the history of colonial South Africa* (London, 1993).

²²⁹ Bethencourt, *Racisms*, 364.

²³⁰ Walter Hely-Hutchinson, ‘South Africa’ in W.J. Ashley (ed.), *British Dominions: Their present commercial and industrial condition* (London, 1911), 122.

²³¹ For a good example of eugenics in a colonial context, see Chloe Campbell, *Race and Empire: Eugenics in Colonial Kenya* (Manchester, 2007).

What, then, can racism as an action and the scientific racist principles of the time tell us about how British officials perceived and responded to colonial violence and threats to stable rule? It remains clear that it was instrumental in constructing a framework within which these perceptions could be constructed in the first place. Their views on the colonised, their attributes and characteristics and how they were – according to the conceptions of right and wrong at the time – to be governed were all aspects imperative to their perception and responses. Racism and the scientific verification it obtained at the time created a mandate for the officials to rule and at times oppress and inflict violence upon their perceived inferiors. As Tacitus noted, ‘it is human nature to resent the one whom you have injured.’²³² Thus, racism was an explanation just as much as a force of control. Consequently, racialism constructed a perception of Africans in which violence could more easily be perpetrated and justified. It was a dehumanisation of them as being lesser humans which made it seem plausible that people were forced to engage in what Rudyard Kipling called ‘savage wars of peace’ to free these ‘savages’ from ‘native despots’ and exploiters.²³³ Often, however, this resulted in ruthless methods of warfare and exploitation by the colonial state.

²³² Richard Drayton, *Nature's Government: Science, Imperial Britain and the 'Improvement' of the World* (New Haven, 2000), 225.

²³³ Osterhammel, *Colonialism*, 44.

2 The 1896 Ndebele Rebellion in Southern Rhodesia

Introduction

In March 1896, the settlers residing in the newly subjugated Matabeleland, were running for their lives. In the aftermath of the ill-fated Jameson Raid on the Transvaal in December 1895, the defences of this fragile company-ruled domain were laid bare, paving the way for the Ndebele to rise against their colonial overlords in what came to be a bloody affair that forced the British government to revise its policy regarding company rule in Southern Rhodesia and question its very moral foundations. It was estimated that a staggering 372 European settlers were killed and 129 wounded. At the time, the very idea that supposedly vile and savage Africans had killed and butchered innocent white settlers incited demands for resolute military reaction to crush the rebellion and retain stable colonial rule with the use of imperial troops.²³⁴

In 1893, Matabeleland, under the notorious King Lobengula, was conquered by the BSAC in a dubious and rapidly fought war. The Ndebele was a breakout nation from the old Zulu Kingdom and was considered the most formidable African military presence by many Europeans, thereby constructing a basis for the British perception of the Ndebele, as these were the relatives of the old enemy they had fought at Isandlwana and Rorke's Drift.²³⁵ Therefore, the decision to go to war in 1893 was not easy and was generally considered a risky option for the BSAC and the Europeans in Southern Africa in general.

As a colony, Southern Rhodesia had, on the one hand, disappointed expectations regarding mineral wealth, but on the other hand, it was soon considered an important and integral part of the British Empire in Southern Africa and a gateway to control its interior. The colonial past of Southern Rhodesia remains a widely researched and discussed topic. However, the 1896 rebellion has generally been marginalised in this historiography, as it tends to be overshadowed by the 1893 war. Also, the later anticolonial developments, especially the bush war in the 1960s and 1970s and the Declaration of Unilateral Independence in 1965, have cast a long shadow on both scholarly and popular attention to the Rhodesian past.

²³⁴ Robin Palmer, *Land and Racial Domination in Rhodesia* (Berkeley, 1977), 55-56.

²³⁵ The Ndebele broke out of the Zulu nation in 1822 under the leadership of legendary leader Mzilikazi. See Ngwabi Bhebe, *Lobengula of Zimbabwe* (London, 1977), 9.

Indeed, the 1896 rebellions of the Ndebele and Shona are often called the first Chimurenga with the second being the bush war in the 1960s-1970s, aimed against Ian Smith and the white minority government.²³⁶

The 1896 rebellion represents the dynamics of imperialism in a clear and concise manner. Not only was it an incident in which significant violence was perpetrated, it also saw the involvement of characters often considered to be personifications of the imperialistic culture and agenda at the time. These included Cecil Rhodes, who, in addition to being Director of the BSAC, was also Prime Minister of the Cape Colony until 1896, and Joseph Chamberlain, the recently appointed Secretary of State of the Colonies, who, alongside later High Commissioner to South Africa, Alfred Milner, advocated the importance of the Empire to the British public and is widely seen as a crucial figure in the outbreak of the South African War in 1899.²³⁷ The 1896 rebellion, therefore, represent a crisis of colonial rule that involved some of the most prominent and important figures in the British official mind of imperialism, not only of that time but perhaps altogether.

The rebellion itself saw the use of ruthless military strategies being employed by both sides. In the initial phase when the Ndebele were on the offensive, no white settler, whether man, woman or child, was spared. Reports of savagery soon reached London and the rest of Britain and caused alarm among officials and the public alike. Upon the arrival of imperial troops, however, the tables soon turned, and through the use of, for instance, maxim guns and dynamite, the British forced the Ndebele into a long and bloody retreat. In the aftermath, the administrative framework of company rule was revised and linked the interests, politics and ideologies of colonial rule and violence.

This case study will examine how British officials perceived and responded to this crisis of colonial rule in Southern Rhodesia. It will analyse the reasoning of the official mind in its decision-making regarding the combatting of this rebellion as well as its agenda and stakes that shaped the post-war policies of how colonial rule was to be effectuated henceforth. Thus, the main emphasis is mainly focused on the situation immediately after the rebellion where company rule and the violence perpetrated came under scrutiny. Moreover, since the British government intervened on behalf of the BSAC, it touches upon key relations between two central actors whose different and, as will be shown, often

²³⁶ Palmer, *Land and Racial Domination*, 54-55.

²³⁷ For Chamberlain, see, for instance, Dominic Michel Bray, 'Joseph Chamberlain and Foreign Policy, 1895-1903', (The University of East Anglia, D. Phil Thesis, 2015). Regarding Rhodes, numerous biographies have been published. See, for instance, Robert Rotberg, *The Founder: Cecil Rhodes and the Pursuit of Power* (Oxford, 1988) and more recently, Brian Roberts, *Cecil Rhodes: Flawed Colossus* (London, 2015).

opposing interests shaped the negotiations and outlook of Southern Rhodesia and its indigenous population.

Historiography and Methodological Considerations

The historiography of both Matabele wars and colonial Southern Rhodesia has mainly showcased imperial expansion as an agent of commercial interests.²³⁸ It cannot be denied that the commercial interests of the BSAC and imperialist agents, in general, were significant. This is particularly clear considering the fact that the BSACs headquarters in London was on 15 St. Swithin's Lane – conveniently in the same building as the Rothschild Corporation, which had funded much of the BSAC.²³⁹ Southern Rhodesia was believed to be home to vast mineral wealth. This was perhaps best illustrated by Rider Haggard's contemporary epic *King Solomon's Mines* (1885), which suggested that the legendary mines of the biblical figure, King Solomon, were in fact in Southern Rhodesia, thus romanticising the region as an imperialistic fable, or rather, an African El Dorado.

The general literature on imperialism in Africa tends to focus on the First Matabele War in 1893, rather than on the 1896 rebellion. The best example of this is, perhaps, H.L. Wesseling's *Divide and Rule: The Partition of Africa, 1880-1914* (1996), where it is only the First Matabele War that is explored. This exemplifies that the 1896 rebellion (also referred to as the Second Matabele War) has been somewhat left out of most scholarly literature, perhaps because the First Matabele War fits better into the notion of imperialism in Africa as being defined by European economic and mineral greed, as well as the technological gap that furnished imperial expansion, as the 1893 war was the first use of the maxim gun.²⁴⁰ In terms of the economic history of Southern Rhodesia, this has mainly been pioneered by Ian Phimister.²⁴¹ However, due to the scope of this thesis, this aspect will be obscured although economic interests were the main incentive for Rhodes in his venture into Mashona and later Matabeleland. Instead, the 1896 rebellion was a violent affair that represented imperial expansion and administration, and was a colonial conflict that questioned the civilising principles of Empire and highlighted the racial tensions of Southern Africa. Thus, this particular event deserves further scholarly enquiry from the perspective of Whitehall and its

²³⁸ See, for instance, Pakenham, *The Scramble for Africa* or Wesseling *Divide and Rule*.

²³⁹ TNA: CO 879/52: BSAC to CO, 16 June 1897, 17.

²⁴⁰ Wesseling, *Divide and Rule*, 294.

²⁴¹ See, for instance, Ian Phimister, *An Economic and Social History of Zimbabwe, 1890-1948. Capital, Accumulation and Class Struggle* (London, 1988).

stakes and interests in order to fully grasp the complexity of colonial rule and violence in Southern Rhodesia.

The aforementioned tendency to draw continuities from 1896 to the politics and wars of decolonisation in the 1960s and 1970s led to a growing interest in colonial Southern Rhodesia as a whole. Especially in the 1960s, historians were preoccupied with the historical context of the new and extraordinary independence of Southern Rhodesia (Northern Rhodesia became Zambia), which was traced back to the colonial origins of the 1890s. Indeed, most contributions to the colonial era were written at this time in the shadow of independence and the violent struggle of decolonisation led by, among others, Robert Mugabe. Therefore, due to the many new developments within the wider historiography over the last few decades, particularly within imperial history, a new examination of early colonial Southern Rhodesia is now overdue.

Nevertheless, the literature written in the light of decolonisation cannot, and should not, be disregarded. These works are each a representative of their time, and especially in the case of Southern Rhodesia, there are a number of works that deserve acclamation for their contribution. For instance, Arthur Keppel-Jones' *Rhodes and Rhodesia* (1983) remains an important work, not so much because of its arguments but rather because it is a detailed overview of the period under scrutiny. The actions, stakes and interests of various actors are showcased as Keppel-Jones attempts to write a complete history of the early years of colonial Southern Rhodesia. But the lack of depth and a specific focus means that other publications are more relevant.²⁴² Instead, this chapter relies more on what is perhaps the most notable publication on the 1896 rebellion, Ranger's aforementioned *Revolt in Southern Rhodesia* (1967). Relying on source material from the National Archives in Salisbury, Southern Rhodesia (Today Harare, Zimbabwe), Ranger examines the causes and developments of the 1896 rebellion. In comparison, however, this case study deals with source material, particularly from the CO, stored at the National Archives in London, hence differing from Ranger on the content of source material: this has led to some divergences, as will be shown.²⁴³ This is not to suggest disagreement with Ranger's arguments and observations: rather, it should be seen as a different case in that this chapter relies on different sources on the same aspect,

²⁴² Arthur Keppel-Jones, *Rhodes and Rhodesia: The White Conquest of Zimbabwe, 1884-1902* (Montreal, 1983).

Indeed, this work received much criticism as it glanced over various topics and ignored important contributions. See, for instance, Richard Parry, 'Review: Rhodes and Rhodesia...', *Canadian Journal of African Studies*, 19, 3 (1985) and Terence Ranger, 'Review: Rhodes and Rhodesia...', *The Journal of African History*, 26, 1 (1985).

²⁴³ Ranger, *Revolt in Southern Rhodesia*, x.

thus revealing different observations. However, commenting on the view of the colonial officer, Ranger notes that ‘official beliefs about African society were mostly ill-founded.’²⁴⁴ In this case study, this will be nuanced, as officials, especially in London, were not exclusively ill-disposed towards the Ndebele. More generally, Ranger seeks to examine the Ndebele and Shona people’s incentives and beliefs surrounding the rebellion. Yet, as Ranger also alludes, these societies can be hard to penetrate and obtain oral sources from, and therefore, most sources are those of the BSAC. What is consequently evident is that Ranger uses sources which he himself considers to be ill-founded towards the peoples he seeks to examine. While this could be considered a grave methodological error, it is nonetheless understandable considering the accessibility of the sources on these events. In the case of oral sources, which were then relevant, as there were still living witnesses to the 1896 rebellion when Ranger wrote his book, the seventy years that had passed question the credibility of such sources.²⁴⁵

Ranger gives little indication of the position from Whitehall; nor does he sufficiently disseminate the role of the CO: it is consistently comprised as an opposition to the BSAC, thus being a contrast to what he is actually examining and not a historical actor *per se*. Indeed, there seems to be a general tendency among scholars working with Southern Rhodesia in the period to disregard the role of Whitehall as a mere accomplice to the BSAC.²⁴⁶ This was perhaps in the spirit of the then recent declaration of independence, but it nonetheless falls short in that it ignores the complex relations between company and government and the various agendas and overarching imperial policies at play. Therefore, this case study can contribute by assessing the 1896 rebellion from the viewpoint of London, where Whitehall and the interests here are the primary object of investigation.

When considering the historiography of Southern Rhodesia in the late nineteenth century, particularly with a focus on the 1896 rebellion, it becomes evident how important Ranger’s work has been. Most literature tends to base its historical accounts on Ranger’s representations hereof, often with little methodological critique. Such literary works include Robin Palmer’s *Land and Racial Domination in Rhodesia* (1977), Robert Blake’s *A history of Rhodesia* (1977) and Anthony De Perna’s *A right to be proud: The Struggle for Self-Government and the Roots of White Nationalism in Rhodesia 1890-1922* (1978). All of these works base most of their investigation into the Rhodesian past on Ranger before making connections to contemporary issues regarding the state of Southern Rhodesia, as can be seen in their year

²⁴⁴ Ibid., x.

²⁴⁵ Ibid., x-xi.

²⁴⁶ Cobbing, ‘The Ndebele under the Khumalos’ 406-8.

of publication and the consensus that the 1896 rebellion was a precursor to the African nationalists of the 1960s and 1970s.²⁴⁷

The place of African nationalism is therefore intrinsic in the historiography of the 'first' Chimurenga. Ranger contends that it was here that it originated and that this was perhaps the earliest incident on the entire continent in which a sentiment of national consciousness united Africans against their European colonisers, as it brought together the Ndebele and Shona, who had traditionally been rivals. Later publications, especially by Julian Cobbing and Daniel Beach (the latter focusing primarily on the Shona rebellion), have instead emphasised local grievances rather than overarching ideas of nationalism to have been the motive behind the rebellion(s).²⁴⁸ Indeed, this bears resemblance to the historiography of GSWA, as will be discussed later, where similar trajectories of national historiographies have set down confinements on the historical context of colonialism.

Violence and Memory: One Hundred Years in the Dark Forests of Matabeleland (2000), by Ranger, Jocelyn Alexander and JoAnn McGregor, discusses the Shangani Reserve in Northern Matabeleland as a geographical sphere of historical importance. The interesting use of violence as a rather abstract concept is particularly relevant. It is asserted that violence 'has so powerfully shaped the history and memory of the past in Matabeleland.'²⁴⁹ Furthermore, the book seeks to investigate the relationships of resistance to various pressures: colonial expansion, nationalism, ethnicity, religion and of course, the guerrilla war that engulfed Southern Rhodesia in the 1960s and 1970s.²⁵⁰ The place of later political developments in Africa and how this has influenced the colonial past is crucial to draw from this work. Instead, *Violence and Memory* seeks to represent the Southern Rhodesian past outside the shadow of politicised discourses influenced by nationalist favouritism.²⁵¹ It therefore serves well to illustrate the contentious nature of the history of Southern Rhodesia, where the environment and its associated memories remain subjected to contemporary politics and nationalist sentiments.

Another important publication to promote is Charles van Onselen's *Chibaro: African Mine Labour in Southern Rhodesia 1900-1903* (1976), which gives an in-depth examination of

²⁴⁷ Anthony Perna, *A right to be proud: The struggle for Self-Government and the Roots of White Nationalism in Rhodesia, 1890-1922* (Bulawayo, 1978), 30.

²⁴⁸ See Cobbing, 'The Ndebele under the Khumalos' and D. N Beach, 'Chimurenga: The Shona Rising of 1896-97', *The Journal of African History*, 20, 3 (1979). For a recent overview see Suzanne Dawson, 'The First Chimurenga: 1896-1897 Uprising in Matabeleland and Mashonaland and Continued Conflicts in Academia', *Constellations*, 2, 2 (2011).

²⁴⁹ Ranger, Alexander and McGregor, *Violence and Memory*, 1.

²⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 3.

²⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 4-5.

the issue of labour within a confined time period. The focus here is not on the historical development of Southern Rhodesia: rather, it exclusively aims to scrutinise the complex source material on the labour administration in the said period. Nevertheless, van Onselen, just like his contemporaries, almost blindly relies on Ranger's work, but also makes the connection of Southern Rhodesia as being within a wider framework, particularly in the light of the South African War, due to its relevance for his time span.²⁵²

Besides the work of Ranger, perhaps the most pivotal piece of work for this case study is Claire Palley's *The Constitutional History and Law of Southern Rhodesia, 1888-1965* (1966). Not only is it published just prior to Ranger's work, it also uses source material from the National Archives in London. Palley successfully manages to give an eloquent and thorough examination of the legislative powers and privileges distributed in Southern Rhodesia over a relatively long period of time. However, the main focus is not the 1896 rebellion as such. Rather, Palley is focussed on the long-term developments of constitutional law and legislation in Southern Rhodesia up to 1965. Therefore, the 1896 rebellion is seen merely as part of a historical trajectory leading to later developments. Although using some of the same sources as this case study, Palley has not approached them exclusively as a historian, but rather from a legal perspective (Palley is indeed in law, both as an academic and a lawyer). Palley's work is perhaps one of the most important, yet most overlooked contributions on Rhodesian history in general. It is true that it cannot be considered a historical work exclusively, yet she examines the legislative and constitutional negotiations of the aftermath of the 1896 rebellion in detail. However, since it focused on legislative and constitutional matters, it certainly does open up other interpretations, including social, political and imperial factors. Unfortunately, Palley rarely takes the leap from discussing the theoretical framework, as can be defined as the laws and legislation of Southern Rhodesia, to the practice: what *actually* happened and whether it violated (or adhered to) those principles she analyses. Furthermore, Palley mistakenly sees the position of the official mind as being based on two basic principles: financial issues and the BSAC being to blame for the Jameson Raid.²⁵³ Instead, the hostile relationship between the BSAC and the CO, in particular, should also be seen in the light of a wider and more complicated framework that included geopolitical and imperial but also ideological factors.

²⁵² Charles van Onselen, *Chibaro: African Mine Labour in Southern Rhodesia 1900-1903* (London, 1976), 15; 136.

²⁵³ Claire Palley, *The Constitutional History and Law of Southern Rhodesia, 1888-1965* (Oxford, 1966), 130-31.

It is important to reiterate that this case study primarily deals with the conflict in Matabeleland and not the one in Mashonaland to the north. There are several reasons for this. First of all, it would be erroneous to combine the two into one single conflict, although this has been the tendency in the wider historiography. The Ndebele and Shona did co-operate in many incidents, but their efforts were also separated by chronology: the Shona rebellion came when the Ndebele were on the retreat. Second, when approaching the conflict from the standpoint of British officials, it remains clear that Matabeleland and the Ndebele present a very specific case and the one referred to by the German delegation in 1919. Third, and lastly, as will be shown in this case study, Matabeleland and the colonial rule regarding the Ndebele was different from Mashonaland, as the BSAC legalistically had more freedom in their administration of Matabeleland. The Charter granted to them was ostensibly extended to Matabeleland but did not incur full and strict obligations, as were applied in Mashonaland, because Matabeleland was conquered territory.²⁵⁴

By first examining the wider chronological framework of the rebellion, this case study will analyse the principles of the BSAC as granted in its charter in 1889 and the following war in 1893, which was the precursor to the rebellion in 1896. Through an examination of the BSAC and the stance of the official mind on a series of issues in which its status as the civilised party would be questioned, it seeks to provide an alternative interpretation of the rebellion as it was asserted from London rather than from Southern Rhodesia itself. It is connected to a wider imperial perception of empire, justice, race and civilisation altogether, and will seek to address exactly how Britain, as the empire embarking on the mission to rid the world of slavery, dealt with overt contradictions on this exact issue.

The Conquest of Southern Rhodesia and the Foundations of Company Rule

European interests in what became Southern Rhodesia date back to Portuguese missionary missions in the eighteenth century. However, the foundations for the colonial state that was created here may be found in the 1880s where British and Cape officials sought to expand their sphere of influence due to fears of Boer expansion northwards. In 1888 the Moffat Treaty was signed where King Lobengula had promised to cease any contact with other foreign states, and in that same year he signed the contentious Rudd Concession, giving

²⁵⁴ John Galbraith, *Crown and Charter: The Early Years of the British South Africa Company* (London, 1974), 319.

Rhodes and his accomplices the mineral rights to his land in return for rifles and a steamboat. Although Lobengula later repudiated the Rudd Concession, it nonetheless laid the groundwork for the charter granted to Rhodes in 1889.²⁵⁵

The royal charter of the BSAC from 1889 was very particular about the Company's conduct within the colonial jurisdiction of the British Empire, especially when it came to the relations with indigenous peoples, where it was stated that 'in case at any time any difference arises between any chief or tribe inhabiting any of the territories aforesaid and the Company, that difference shall, if Our Secretary of State so require, be submitted by the Company to him for his decision and the Company shall act in accordance with such decision.'²⁵⁶ In essence, this article meant that the BSAC had to follow the directions of the Secretary of State (for the Colonies) if a conflict with an indigenous group should emerge. Therefore, the British government was inevitably involved in the expansionist conduct of the BSAC, and furthermore, if a conflict should arise, the government was expected to intervene either to withdraw the BSAC from power or to provide support and reinstate colonial rule. It may be unnecessary at this stage to mention that it was of course the latter of these two possibilities that was preferred in the case of the 1896 rebellion, and probably in most other such cases.

The charter of the BSAC not only concerned the relationship between government and private enterprise in the light of imperial expansion; when it came to the indigenous peoples themselves, the charter had several paragraphs which were included to prevent the ill-treatment of these peoples as well as being in line with the moral principles of empire vis-à-vis the civilising mission and humanitarian ideology. For instance, the charter dictated that the BSAC should prevent slave trade or 'any system of domestic servitude' where it could.²⁵⁷ This was directly duplicated from the aforementioned Berlin Treaty and company-ruled territory was therefore ostensibly entangled into the treaties the British government had entered concerning colonial rule in Africa. Consequently, the responsibilities and actions of the BSAC were, to some extent, under the umbrella of Whitehall.

Perhaps foreseeing any troubles from this, it was determined in the charter that the BSAC should not interfere with African religion or culture unless 'necessary for the interest of humanity.'²⁵⁸ Moreover, 'the Company are not to interfere in any political or administrative matters whether regarding customs, laws or succession unless it will break any British laws

²⁵⁵ Arthur Keppel-Jones, 'The Occupation of Mashonaland', *Report of the Annual meeting of the Canadian Historical Association*, 39, 1 (1960), 74-75.

²⁵⁶ TNA: DO 119/521: Report of the Law Officers of the Crown on the British South Africa Company's rights in Bechuanaland; Orders in Council and Proclamations relating to Southern Rhodesia; various commissions issued to Lord Milner: Charter of the BSAC, October 29 1889, Article 7.

²⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, Article 11.

²⁵⁸ TNA: DO 119/521: Charter of the British South Africa Company, 29 October 1889, Article 13.

which be in force.²⁵⁹ Thus, the BSAC was not allowed to interfere politically with the Ndebele to obtain interests, whether political or economic, except when certain practices were deemed repugnant to British values. For the BSAC, this meant that in order to wage war against the Ndebele and to conquer Matabeleland, they would need a *casus belli* or otherwise risk losing the territory when conquering it.²⁶⁰

Nevertheless, what remains clear is that the charter was far more than a financial manifesto that promulgated an insatiable need for gold. It included political, ethical and even religious elements which would never lead to better business for Rhodes or his compatriots. Company rule was unpopular in the public and among British officials, especially due to its record of disrespecting 'native trusteeship', but at the time, the BSAC was considered the best way to secure broader strategic aims in Southern Africa.²⁶¹ Indeed, the charter encouraged the Company to act as a sub-imperial expansionist agent to 'settle any such territories and lands as aforesaid (Mashonaland), and to aid and promote immigration.'²⁶² In other words, this was expansion through commerce: the BSAC was an imperial pioneer paving the way for the British Empire to enforce itself in a region aimed at expansion to secure the interior of Southern Africa, which could otherwise fall into the hands of Britain's rivals.

The geopolitical reasons for government intervention cannot be neglected: considering the wider region, it was necessary for Britain to consolidate its power by including Matabeleland in its sphere of control. Due to the rumoured gold deposits, an influx of white settlers was expected, and subsequently, this would lead to claims by Portugal, Germany and the Transvaal.²⁶³ The conviction that other European powers had their eye fixed on Matabeleland remained at the crux of South African governance, and as late as 1908, Rhodes was still considered to have 'saved' the interior of South Africa from Boer or German annexation.²⁶⁴ The BSAC's proposed expansion north into the South African hinterland was therefore a timely and viable opportunity for Whitehall to prevent any rivals, especially Germany, from seizing their territory and thus threatening the delicate relationship between Britain and the Boer Republics. However, the main problem remained how to justify expansion into the interior, as it would be a costly affair. Therefore 'the answer was found in the revival for a time of the system of chartered companies', as was perhaps best

²⁵⁹ Ibid., Article 14.

²⁶⁰ Galbraith, *Crown and Charter*, 299.

²⁶¹ Robinson and Gallagher, *Africa and the Victorians*, 250.

²⁶² TNA: DO 119/521: Charter, Article 24.

²⁶³ Robinson and Gallagher, *Africa and the Victorians*, 221.

²⁶⁴ SHL: DT 706 GOV, *Government of South Africa*, Vol. I, 1908, 27.

characterised by the East India Company and its eventual takeover by the crown in 1858.²⁶⁵ Companies such as the BSAC could go where the government could not and work as sub-imperial pioneers which ‘ensembles the basic criteria, institutions and frameworks of rule, which may later be taken over by the British government or its self-governing colonies.’²⁶⁶ But crucially, the BSAC also imposed a degree of responsibility on the government, for if they were to secure their geopolitical interests in the region the Company demanded the support of the government. This was in part political, but the Company’s territory was soon painted red on the map and thus mentally considered part of the British Empire. Consequently, imperial reasoning dictated that in case of an African uprising against the BSAC, the government would defend the empire.²⁶⁷

There may already have been an inclination to eventually seize company territory from the outset, and combined with the geopolitical situation, the administration of the nearby British territories and the BSAC were inseparable. Therefore, it is important to understand the powers of the colonial administration in the British Southern African colonies as well. Here, the High Commissioner remained a powerful figure, perhaps due to the British tradition of empire, which, of course, stretched further back than the telegraph, where such distribution of power was necessary to run a worldwide empire efficiently. Among the responsibilities of the High Commissioner was the welfare of the Africans: ‘The High Commissioner... shall respect any native laws or customs by which the civil relations of any native Chiefs, tribes, or populations under Her Majesty’s protection are now regulated, except so far as the same may be incompatible with the due exercise of Her Majesty’s power and jurisdiction.’²⁶⁸

Consequently, both the BSAC and the High Commissioner of South Africa were obliged to respect African laws, customs and culture and to not interfere with them in any way that might cause a conflict. The powers and privileges for both the BSAC and the High Commissioner were thus unmistakably in conflict: on the one hand, it sought to motivate the BSAC to seek colonial expansion and to introduce settlers to new territory that was, albeit indirectly, part of the British Empire. On the other hand, both the BSAC and the High Commissioner were, whilst seeking to expand, obliged to respect the Ndebele, not to interfere with them in order to secure political or commercial interests, and most importantly,

²⁶⁵ Hugh Egerton, *A Short History of British Colonial Policy* (London, 1928), 465.

²⁶⁶ Ibid., 466-67.

²⁶⁷ Richard Price, *Making Empire: Colonial Encounters and the Creation of Imperial Rule in Nineteenth-Century Africa* (Cambridge 2008), 8-9.

²⁶⁸ TNA: WO 32/5622: Order of the Queen in council providing for the exercise of Her Majesty’s jurisdiction in certain territories of South Africa which are under the protection of Her Majesty, 9 May 1891, 3.

to avoid triggering any conflict with them. In short, they were obliged to seek further colonial expansion into the African continent without angering, disrespecting or indeed fighting the indigenous peoples who lived on the land on which they expanded: a task nothing short of impossible. Furthermore, this indicates that there was an idea of a rather inherent right to expansion based on an ideology of civilising and the furthering of mankind as the moral impetus.

The First Matabele War, 1893

Lobengula was one of the most renowned and powerful African rulers in the region and had for years claimed tributes from other tribes. However, with the establishment of Fort Salisbury (today Harare) in 1890, many of these tribes' chiefs believed they were now vassals to the British and should therefore not pay any tribute to Lobengula but, if at all, to the BSAC.²⁶⁹ Furthermore, Rhodes had Lobengula's heirs attend a school in Cape Town, thus causing uncertainty among the Ndebele because of growing confusion on the issue of succession due to their absence.²⁷⁰ Because of pressure from within the Ndebele community and the loss of authority over nearby tribes, Lobengula was politically cornered and had no opportunity but to send out raiding parties against the Shona tribes that had refused to pay tribute in an attempt to consolidate his power. This was the *casus belli* the BSAC had been waiting for: in order to 'defend' the Shona, Matabeleland was invaded in 1893.²⁷¹ The real interests were not just that annexing Matabeleland would connect the Company's territory to the rest of Southern Africa, but also that the Ndebele capital, Bulawayo, was also conveniently believed to be situated in the middle of a supposed gold deposit.²⁷² Indeed, Mashonaland had been a disappointment for speculators, and therefore expanding south could open up new potentialities that could save the BSAC.²⁷³

Although the BSAC had already secured the mineral rights from Lobengula, seizing complete power and control of Bulawayo would be an asset to their business by, for instance, building a railroad to South Africa. Hence, there was significant suspicion from the British government that the BSAC had provoked Lobengula in order to create a *casus belli*. These suspicions were so certain that the government considered ending company rule altogether

²⁶⁹ John M. Mackenzie, *Propaganda and Empire: The Manipulation of British Public Opinion, 1880-1960* (Manchester, 1984), 52.

²⁷⁰ Peter Baxter, *Rhodesia: The Last Outpost of the British Empire 1890-1980* (Alberton ZA), 2010), 101.

²⁷¹ Julie Bonello, 'The Development of Early Settler Identity in Southern Rhodesia: 1890-1914', *The International Journal of African Historical Studies*, 43, 2 (2010), 346.

²⁷² See appendix C

²⁷³ Galbraith, *Crown and Charter*, 300-1.

as a result of what they considered to be transgressing the powers outlined in the charter.²⁷⁴ Moreover, the Brussels Treaty of 1890 had stated that there should be a joint attempt to diminish inland wars between Africans, thus corresponding to, and working as a justifying principle for, the BSACs reason to intervene.²⁷⁵ Nevertheless, it remains clear that the BSAC was unable to fulfill both countering obligations to expand and to preserve peace at the same time since this was impossible after the BSAC disrupted the political structures of the region. For instance, in 1892, the BSAC reported that the 'Native Affairs' of that year had been 'satisfactory' and that 'the occupation of the country (Mashonaland) has already had the effect of putting a stop to the periodical raids made by the Matabele.'²⁷⁶ The mere presence of the BSAC and the sovereignty it imposed on Mashonaland therefore deeply affected the political situation between the African tribes in the region. While it may have been a positive that the violent and oppressive raids of the Ndebele were ended, it nonetheless caused further resentment among the Ndebele and made war more likely.

The First Matabele War broke out after a skirmish between a patrol and a Ndebele raiding party near the settlement of Victoria. The actual circumstances are somewhat unclear and many historians and contemporary critics have suggested that the BSAC deliberately provoked the war by, for instance, having the patrol led by an inexperienced officer. In response, the Company reiterated that it prevented the raiders from taking slaves to mitigate metropolitan criticism and stated that it had adhered to the charter, since 'every effort had been made to avoid collision with the natives.'²⁷⁷ Adopting the argument of preventing African slavery was, of course, a forceful move, as immediate critique from humanitarian critics such as the APS could be averted. Furthermore, when the BSAC were later to come under scrutiny after the Jameson Raid in 1895, the First Matabele War was again promoted by the BSAC as an incident of benign company rule, where Lobengula had been prevented from imposing a savage regime and without any cost to the British taxpayer, as Rhodes 'asked for no assistance from Her Majesty's Government.'²⁷⁸

The First Matabele War was in many ways the foundation for the later rebellion in 1896 because the war was fought with such pace and aggression that the expansion into Matabeleland inevitably had consequences, not only in the immediate resistance that

²⁷⁴ Robinson and Gallagher, *Africa and the Victorians*, 252.

²⁷⁵ Hyam, *Britain's Imperial Century*, 223.

²⁷⁶ LSE: DT 751: The British South Africa Company, Report on the Company's proceedings and the conditions of the territories within the sphere of its operation, 1889-1892, 29 November 1892, 32.

²⁷⁷ LSE: DT 751: The British South Africa Company, Report on the Company's proceedings and the conditions of the territories within the sphere of its operation, 1892-1894, 18 January 1895, 17.

²⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 17-18.

constituted the first war, but also later when company rule was being implemented and the desire to resist the British expansion was still fresh in the Ndebele people's memory. Although this was a company-led war, the British government was entangled into the whole affair. For instance, Governor of the Cape Colony, Hercules Robinson (from 1896 Lord Rosmead), had significant investments in the BSAC and was involved in securing the aforementioned charter in 1889. P.J. Cain and A.G. Hopkins focus on this connection and track the chain of causation in Southern Africa that culminated in the South African War in 1899 back to London through the intertwined interests of company and government individuals.²⁷⁹ However, Rhodes' 'Cape to Cairo' vision, wherein Southern Rhodesia was earmarked as a stepping stone, was according to Robinson and Gallagher not 'the aspiration of Whitehall, but of Cape railway and mineral interests.'²⁸⁰ The entanglement between Whitehall and the BSAC around 1893 was therefore ambiguous and complex; it cannot be reduced to a case where Robinson's investments were the definitive factor, but rather the expansion into Matabeleland was mainly due to geopolitical concerns, individual aspirations and economic incentives, whether investments or dreams of gold mines.²⁸¹ Using the lure of the supposed vast gold deposits, Rhodes developed his plan to expand British influence and realise his ambition of connecting the Cape to Cairo by railway and thus being a pioneer for Britain in the scramble for Africa.²⁸² But Rhodes also used the railway to obtain support for the charter, as it would effectively ensure British control of the hinterland.²⁸³ Also, expansion, albeit through the BSAC, meant the surrounding of the Transvaal, which adhered to British strategies leading up to the South African War.

Perhaps one of the reasons why British officials, particularly in London, allowed the Company to relatively freely establish its dominion over Matabeleland was the fact that a romantic image of Southern Rhodesia and the Ndebele had been painted by, for instance, Rider Haggard and his brother – the latter was in fact commissioned by the BSAC – which led British officials in London to perceive Lobengula and affairs in Southern Rhodesia in clichés.²⁸⁴ For instance, the First Matabele War was re-enacted in several performances such as *Lobengula's March*, *The Battle of Bembezi* as well as other spectacles that not only hinted at the greatness and goodness of Empire, but also at the alleged savage nature of the half-naked,

²⁷⁹ P.J. Cain and A.G. Hopkins, *British Imperialism: Innovation and Expansion 1688-1914* (New York, 1993), 376.

²⁸⁰ Robinson and Gallagher, *Africa and the Victorians*, 227.

²⁸¹ Ibid., 235-236.

²⁸² Perna, *A right to be proud*, 1-3.

²⁸³ Jon Lunn, 'The Political Economy of Primary Railway Construction in the Rhodesias, 1890-1911', *The Journal of African History*, 33, 2 (1992), 242.

²⁸⁴ William H Worger, 'Southern and Central Africa' in Robin Winks (ed.), *The Oxford History of the British Empire: Historiography* (Oxford, 1999), 515.

war-dancing Ndebele.²⁸⁵ This may best be exemplified with the re-enactment of a Ndebele attack on Major Wilson's party at the Earls Court Exhibition in 1899, titled *Savage South Africa*.²⁸⁶

However, critique of the Company's conduct was also rife. According to a pamphlet by an unknown author in 1894, the invasion of Matabeleland was immoral and connected to the liquor trade:

The Mahometan invaded Africa accompanied by the Slave-Trade, but without the alcoholic liquor, which to him was an abomination. The Christian invades Africa with the liquor-cup, and Maxim-guns, and downright slaughter, and then makes a pretence of open bibles, Christian schools, and slaves set free.²⁸⁷

This not only highlights possible motives behind the invasion of Matabeleland, but also makes a clear reference to the technological gap – in this case, the Maxim guns – which rendered possible the invasion and the scramble for Africa in the first place.²⁸⁸ On the whole, this pamphlet sought to attack the very moral aspects of empire and expansion. The basis for the composing of this pamphlet was due to an Irish bishop who remains unnamed, but is most likely Bishop Alexander of Derry, who gave a speech at Westminster Abbey in January 1894 in which he allegedly 'encouraged the policy of slaughtering the Matabele.'²⁸⁹

The justification given by the British for intervening and subsequently invading Matabeleland to supposedly defend the other tribes in the area, particularly the Mashona, was according to this pamphlet a false motive because:

Mashonaland contains forty thousand square miles suitable to colonisation by Europeans... but it is really the gold mines on which the future of Mashonaland depends: without gold the country may be self-supporting, but not sufficiently rich to be valuable as speculating: so after this great scheme of benevolence, these lofty notions of protecting the poor dear Mashona, shrinks into "Auri sacra fames".²⁹⁰

This quotation matches the aforementioned location of gold deposits. These supposedly vast gold deposits must have been of great interest not only to the BSAC but also to the British

²⁸⁵ Mackenzie, *Propaganda and Empire*, 104.

²⁸⁶ TNA: Copyright Office [COPY] 1/441/258, Entry Forms, etc. Photographs registered at the Stationers Company: Photograph scene in the performance of *Savage South Africa*, 9 August 1899, by Frederic G. Hodson.

²⁸⁷ BL 8154.dd.20.(10.), [Unkown Author], *The Matabele Scandal*, 7.

²⁸⁸ Daniel Headrick, *The Tools of Empire: Technology and European Imperialism in the Nineteenth Century* (Oxford, 1981), 4.

²⁸⁹ BL 8154.dd.20.(10.), [Unkown Author], *The Matabele Scandal*, 8. Also Pamela Welch, *Church and Settler in Colonial Zimbabwe: A Study in the History of the Anglican Diocese of Mashonaland/ Southern Rhodesia 1890-1925* (Leiden, 2008), 33.

²⁹⁰ BL 8154.dd.20.(10.), [Unkown Author], *The Matabele Scandal*, 9-10.

government in seizing the valuables for themselves or at least making sure that no other European empire would do so.

The unnamed author also keeps referring to pre-Norman Britain as a comparison to the expansion of the British Empire. The Ndebele are compared to Boadicea and Harold the Great trying to resist the Danish, Norman and Saxon invasions, thus turning the logic of the justification of imperial expansion upside down by making the Ndebele comparative to the heroes of British history while the British represent the vicious invaders of old. Another critic of the Company was a Mr. Ellis from The Society of Friends (Quaker Society), who sent a letter to Prime Minister Gladstone in which he addressed the practices of the Matabele campaign and hence the morality of empire:

We have been deeply pained by the slaughter, which has taken place in Matabeleland by the armed forces of the Chartered Company of South Africa. We strongly feel, that such methods of prosecuting commercial enterprise are entirely incompatible with Christian religion, and we regard it a disgrace to our nation's profession of Christianity that in this the settlement of our countrymen as colonists in uncivilised land has been accompanied by wars of extermination.²⁹¹

Ellis's letter also sought to press the government on the importance of securing future arrangements for the Ndebele, as he argued that it should be solidified that military interferences did not violate the 'rights and liberties of native races, children with ourselves of one common Father.' The responsibilities of the government were, according to Ellis, 'ensuring the treatment of the Matabele, not in a spirit of hostility and greed, but of policy of justice', and this was deemed absolutely necessary 'if Great Britain is to be able with any effect to exercise her influence to prevent similar high-handed encroachment on native races by other civilised powers.'²⁹²

This indicates two important aspects. The first is that it was the responsibilities of the government and not the BSAC that Ellis discussed. This leads to the connection between the BSAC and the government as two different entities that are inevitably intertwined where the government was necessitated to intervene and help the BSAC during the 1896 rebellion. Secondly, the point of Britain needing to have a clean conscience in imperial practices in order to prevent later atrocities being committed by other 'civilised powers' is a particularly interesting one when considering the British stance on the war in GSWA as well as the diplomatic portrayals of German and British colonialism that were presented at Versailles. Indeed, Ellis here echoes the argument made by the Germans in the White Book that the

²⁹¹ BL 8154.dd.20.(10.), Mr. Ellis to Gladstone in [Unkown Author], *The Matabele Scandal*, 10.

²⁹² *Ibid.*, 10-11.

British claim of German colonial exceptionalism in terms of cruelty was hypocritical considering that Britain's colonial conscience was not as clear as Ellis would have liked.

In 1893, however, the general sentiment in the press was a mixture of lamenting the savagery and 'evil creed' of Lobengula and the Ndebele in their raid on the Shona on the one hand, and on the other, a broad suspicion towards the BSAC as being believed to have started the war to save itself from bankruptcy.²⁹³ Furthermore, it was contended that the war could, in the end, bring civilisation to Matabeleland where the savagery of the Ndebele had only exhibited the alarming need hereof. Indicatively, on the confrontation between the Company and the Ndebele, a *Morning Post* article proclaimed that 'when civilisation and barbarism become coterminous the latter must inevitably succumb in the long run, and the only detail is the method by which the end is to be reached.'²⁹⁴ The conduct of the BSAC had thus claimed the attention of the public, officials, and humanitarian groups. On the issue of the methods by which the Ndebele barbarism was to be defeated, Prime Minister William Gladstone, in replying to Ellis's letter, noted that 'I can assure you, that we heartily share the desire of the Society of Friends, that the Matabele should be treated with justice and humanity and mercy.'²⁹⁵

Warfare in the 1896 Rebellion

According to Julian Cobbing, the Ndebele state ended in 1896 rather than 1893 – as claimed by, among others, Ranger – since the Ndebele were no longer under the leadership of a central figure but were instead divided into different clans with different interests, stakes and agendas.²⁹⁶ In particular, three main groupings had emerged after 1893, the Izigabo, the Tahabalala and the Ibutho, who were all connected through social relations, hereditary associations or common goals.²⁹⁷ Yet, the outbreak of hostilities in March 1896, while unifying different groups, was not a coordinated effort, but rather a cumulative result of various fragmented grievances that escalated into a full-flung uprising which nonetheless surprised the BSAC, the settlers and the British government.²⁹⁸

²⁹³ See, for instance, *The Pall Mall Gazette*, 27 October 1893.

²⁹⁴ *The Morning Post*, 18 September 1893.

²⁹⁵ BL 8154.dd.20.(10.), Gladstone to Mr. Ellis in [Unkown Author], *The Matabele Scandal*, 11.

²⁹⁶ Cobbing, 'The Ndebele under the Khumalos', 10.

²⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 389.

²⁹⁸ Dawson, 'The First Chimurenga', 144.

Dr. Leander Starr Jameson's raid on the Transvaal in December 1895 meant that the vast majority of the police force was away. This rendered the Bulawayo, now a white settlement, defenceless, with only a few African policemen and armed volunteer settlers to fight the overwhelming number of rebels.²⁹⁹ The rebels swept across Matabeleland with little opposition, killing white settlers and African collaborators in their wake. In contrast to the events that transpired later in GSWA, the Ndebele killed all whites, including women and children, whereas the Herero in GSWA only targeted German men, leaving women and children alone. After the rebellion had broken out, the settlers in Bulawayo reported to High Commissioner Robinson about the situation in a plea for reinforcements and relief from the impending siege:

Situation here very serious. Kaffirs massing around Bulawayo. Insufficient number of men, horses, provisions, and arms to guarantee safety of inhabitants, which include 300 women. Reinforcements urgently required at once. Do your best to help us. Wire reply.³⁰⁰

Despite these outright fears and the absence of a protection force, Robinson responded by asking Captain Nicholson, who was in Bulawayo, if the telegram was not a mere exaggeration, since he knew from military reports that the settlement was entirely safe.³⁰¹ Nicholson agreed with Robinson and stated that there were at the time enough forces to defend Bulawayo, but no more than that, which meant the farms and smaller settlements were exposed.³⁰² British actors were therefore able to communicate on the situation swiftly. Arguably, the failure of the rebels to cut off Bulawayo completely may have been a decisive factor in the conflict, as the British could effectively coordinate relief and military efforts. According to Cobbing, the Europeans had been deceived by the propaganda of 'total victory' in 1893 and the 'cunning' of the Ndebele had meant that they had been successful in the initial stages of the war.³⁰³ In April 1896, the rebels were close to two decisive victories at Fonseca's Farm and Tuli Road, spawning concerns amongst officials, who now started to take the pleas from Bulawayo and elsewhere more seriously.³⁰⁴ This meant that whereas Robinson could respond rather nonchalantly to the situation in March 1896, the mood had swiftly changed after these

²⁹⁹ TNA: CO 879/47: Hercules Robinson to Joseph Chamberlain, 27 March 1896, 4.

³⁰⁰ TNA: CO 879/47: Messrs. Grey, Boggie, Meikle, Zeederberg, Holland et. al. to the High Commissioner, Cape Town 30 March 1896, enclosure no. 32 in Robinson to Chamberlain, 18 April 1896.

³⁰¹ TNA: CO 879/47: High Commissioner to Captain Nicholson, 30 March, 1896, enclosure no. 33 in Robinson to Chamberlain, 18 April 1896.

³⁰² TNA: CO 879/47: Nicholson to High Commissioner, 30 March 1896, enclosure no. 35 in Robinson to Chamberlain, 18 April 1896.

³⁰³ Cobbing, 'The Ndebele under the Khumalos', 406.

³⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 399.

defeats. However, the Ndebele offensive was eventually broken at the banks of the Umgusa river, after which a long and bloody defensive began for the Ndebele rebels.³⁰⁵

During the First Matabele War, the Ndebele warriors had mostly refused to use firearms, as these were not traditional weapons of Ndebele culture. Instead, they preferred to use the shortened spear – the *assegai* – as had been tradition since the Ndebele affiliation with the Zulu kingdom in the early nineteenth century.³⁰⁶ Undoubtedly this had a profound impact on the relative ease with which the BSAC secured victory in 1893. However, in 1896, the rebels used firearms and thus posed a much more serious threat than previously. Yet these firearms were of poor standard and in many cases obsolete, with little ammunition. Furthermore, supplies of grains and other essentials were limited, and this soon began to encumber the Ndebele war effort.³⁰⁷ Consequently, by mid-June 1896, three months into the rebellion, the rebels had failed to sustain an efficient offensive or drive out the settlers. With the arrival of imperial troops, they now faced a long defensive campaign against the British, with little prospect of victory.³⁰⁸

Matabeleland was a difficult place to fight a war: hills, woodlands, cliffs and other environmental factors made it hard for the British troops to implement their usual strategies of letting the enemy come rushing at them only to be shot down by repeating rifles and machine guns, as had been the case not only in 1893, but also later and perhaps most vividly portrayed at the battle of Omdurman in Sudan in 1898. Although fortune had turned against the Ndebele, the pressure was relieved by the Shona, the old Ndebele vassals, who also rose in rebellion in June 1896.³⁰⁹ Counterfactually, one could contend that if the Mashona had risen at the same time as the Ndebele, the outcome of the initial stages may have been different altogether, as the African resistance would have been overwhelming.³¹⁰

For the British government in London, it was imperative to intervene, not only to save the colony from disaster but also through fear of rebellion spreading to imperial territories such

³⁰⁵ Ranger, *Revolt in Southern Rhodesia*, 174-176.

³⁰⁶ E.A. Maund 'On Matabele and Mashonaland', *Proceedings of the Royal Geographical Society and Monthly Record of Geography*, 13, 1 (1891), 5-6. For a cultural history of the assegai and African view of firearms, see, for instance, Giacomo Macola, "'They Disdain Firearms': The relationship between Guns and the Ngoni of Eastern Zambia to the Early Twentieth Century' in Karen Jones, Giacomo Macola and David Welch (eds.), *A Cultural History of Firearms in the Age of Empire* (London, 2016).

³⁰⁷ Cobbing, 'The Ndebele under the Khumalos', 408.

³⁰⁸ Ranger, *Revolt in Southern Rhodesia*, 182.

³⁰⁹ For the Shona rising in 1896, see D. N Beach, 'Chimurenga: The Shona Rising of 1896-97'.

³¹⁰ Ranger, *Revolt in Southern Rhodesia*, 182-183.

as neighbouring Bechuanaland.³¹¹ However, since it was a rebellion against the BSAC and not the government, such an intervention quickly became complicated. It was soon agreed that the BSAC had to pay for the forces and their operations. Although the government promised that ‘every effort be made to avoid incurring expense which is not absolutely necessary’, it remains clear that the Company was expecting a significant cost from the conflict.³¹² In terms of political and economic factors, the 1896 rebellion was therefore entangled into the relations between the government and the BSAC. The war effort was influenced by the demand for the troops to quell the rebellion without incurring expenses, as this might have resulted in more ruthless warfare. The aim was therefore to end the rebellion quickly to minimise the costs. In other words, they were there to quell the rebellion, but on a budget.

Perhaps this was why the force sent to Southern Rhodesia was rather small. On 1 May 1896, in a communiqué from the CO in London, Sir Frederick Carrington was appointed to lead the imperial forces against the Ndebele. In addition to 300 men from the 7th Hussars and 720 colonial volunteers, he was to lead a force of 480 mounted infantrymen already garrisoned in Cape Town. However, ‘it is not expected that their services will be required in the front, but if you should find it necessary – which I do not anticipate – you will be at liberty to apply them to the High Commissioner.’³¹³ For the officials in London, this small force was seen as being more than enough to quell the rebellion and showcases an official perception of its military reality. While the Shona had not yet risen at this point, it reveals the composure of the CO. But it also indicates an initial reluctance to come to the aid of the BSAC in a territory upon which they had so little influence.

The military practices and the quelling of the rebellion were in many ways symptomatic of the ‘small wars’ that consumed Africa in the late nineteenth century. For example, when instructions were issued to Colonel Richard Martin, who later compiled a significant report on the BSACs administration of the territory, he was told that ‘there is not a possibility of defeat’ and therefore that he could rest assured that his reports and views on measures that were to be implemented after the rebellion were much needed sooner rather

³¹¹ TNA: CO 879/47: Resident Commissioner, Mafeking to High Commissioner, Cape Town, 27 March 1896, enclosure no. 18 in Robinson to Chamberlain, 18 April 1896, 6. Also, TNA: CO 879/47: Chamberlain to Hercules Robinson 14 April 1896.

³¹² TNA: WO 32/5622: Enclosure: CO to Major General Sir Frederick Carrington, 25 April 1896 in CO to WO, 1 May 1896, Report No.3, 5-6.

³¹³ *Ibid.*, 4.

than later.³¹⁴ Hence, by starting to discuss the aftermath even before the rebellion had ended, and in fact before the main obstacle – the Matopo hills south of Bulawayo – had been cleared, the British authorities showed incredible confidence in their own superiority in dealing with an armed rebellion by so-called inferior races.

This military overconfidence of the British official mind may have been sustained by various reports highlighting the relative ease with which they achieved victories in the open field. A report by Carrington describing a British attack on a kraal shows this: over 200 rebels were killed, even more were wounded and the attack caused many rebels to flee. Of the approximately 100 British troops who attacked the kraal, only three died and four were wounded.³¹⁵ The target of the British imperial troops was mainly the Ndebele fighting men. However, there can be little doubt that because of the rumours and stories about settlers being murdered, the troops acted with a degree of vengeance, which was in turn reinforced by racial perceptions of the Ndebele as inferior savages. This was reflected in the brutal way in which kraals and villages were burnt as part of their strategies and the large-scale battles where the Ndebele were massacred in numbers. Yet, the British troops were to face a long and much more difficult task, as the Ndebele responded by taking up new tactics of guerrilla warfare.

Military Superiority and Conduct

Before discussing the developments in the Matopos, where the Ndebele efficiently employed guerrilla warfare tactics, it is first important to discuss how the British perceived the Ndebele rebels and the military conduct of the conflict. As mentioned, the military superiority of the British imperial troops was helped by the technological advantages of the day. Maxim guns, repeating rifles and the telegraph were just some of the ‘tools’ that allowed the British to have significant advantages over the Ndebele rebels. Such material superiority translated into a mentality in which the troops and generals considered themselves almost invincible.³¹⁶ Hence, whenever a British army was defeated in the colonies, it sparked fury, outrage and public scandal in Britain. The superiority in terms of material and tools meant that personnel

³¹⁴ TNA: WO 32/5622: Instructions issued to Colonel Sir Richard Martin, relative to the control of the Armed forces in the territories of the British South Africa Company, and his future position there & Instructions Issued to Carrington relative to Military Operations against the Matabele, April 1896 in CO to WO, 24 June 1896, 2-3.

³¹⁵ TNA: CO 879/52: Carrington to High Commissioner, 14 August 1897, enclosed in Lt. General Goodenough to Chamberlain, 31 August 1896, 2.

³¹⁶ For the psychological effects of the maxim gun see John Ellis, *The Social History of the Machine Gun* (Baltimore, 1986)

in the field became reliant upon this psychological as well as practical effect. According to Cobbing, the 'over-optimism' of the British in the field aided the Ndebele.³¹⁷

Perhaps because of this material superiority and because of their self-identification as being civilised, the British sought to maintain what they considered civilised proceedings. For instance, when a Captain Gibbs had given orders for his men to execute an Ndebele woman and a child for allegedly being spies, it immediately sparked attention from the government, as this could easily be picked up and could spark a potential public critique. Thus, the CO requested Lord Lansdowne, then Secretary of State for War, to make an inquiry into the matter.³¹⁸ The case was considered of such importance and potential malice to the reputation of the British Empire that Carrington informed the Acting High Commissioner that 'unless it is proved clearly that the order was open to misapprehension, I consider that the individuals responsible for execution should be put on trial for murder.'³¹⁹ Gibb's defence described how the woman had allegedly followed them and that the child was hidden under her clothes. The order he gave only concerned the woman, whereas he remained unaware of the presence of the child, who was discovered afterwards.³²⁰ He furthermore described in detail what happened and the reason for his suspicion was based on the woman saying that she was visiting friends in the Indemas region, and was running in the opposite direction when caught. Furthermore, the woman had said during the following interrogation that there were no rebels nearby, although an escort had recently been ambushed and the night before when Gibbs and his men had arrived at the location where they were to build a fort, they had spotted rebel fires during the night.³²¹

Gibbs contended that he could not let the woman go for several reasons: first, she had been into the camp and seen their numbers and occupation. Second, 'the natives had undoubtedly sent her to find out all she could, thinking that, if caught, the white men would neither punish or detain her, being a female.' Third, they had no natural cover where they were building the fort, thus exposing them in the open should they be attacked. Therefore, they were weary and suspicious of any actual or possible rebel activity. Fourth, Gibbs argued that if they had let her go, she would have told the rebels about their situation, and considering the aforementioned nearby skirmish, Gibbs would not risk it. Fifth, Gibbs contended that there was nowhere to keep her as a prisoner: they had neither the facilities

³¹⁷ Cobbing, 'The Ndebele under the Khumalos', 407.

³¹⁸ TNA: CO 879/47: CO to WO, 13 November 1896.

³¹⁹ TNA: CO 879/47: Carrington to Acting High Commissioner, Cape Town, 20 August 1896, enclosure no. 1 in Goodenough to Chamberlain, 12 November 1896.

³²⁰ TNA: CO 879/47: Report on Court Proceedings, enclosure no.1 in Carrington to the High Commissioner, Cape Town, 14 September 1896, 8.

³²¹ *Ibid.*, 3.

nor the supplies, and sending her to the nearest settlement, Gwelo, would have required a large force as escort. This force would furthermore be dismounted, since the horses they had were used for scouting the area. Finally, Gibbs noted that he had no means of communication at the time and could therefore not get in touch with the proper authorities.³²² The information the woman could have passed on to the rebels was, according to Gibbs, crucial, because of their small numbers, the exposure of being in relatively open terrain and the fact that 'she might have told them the important fact, in their eyes, that we had no Maxim gun with us. I attribute the fact of our party of 49 men employed in building Fort Shangani not being attacked or molested to the knowledge the rebels had that we were in possession of a Maxim gun.'³²³ From the British perspective, while it was a very useful weapon, the Maxim gun had a stronger psychological effect, not only on the rebels in the shape of fear but also on the British, giving them a sense of superiority. The fact that they did not have a Maxim gun with them was a great source of concern should the rebels find out, as it might have led to an attack.

Eventually, the inquiry led by Carrington himself found that Gibbs was 'guilty of a grave error of judgement'. However, he was of the belief that Gibbs acted on the basis of the safety of his men: 'considering the critical situation of the small force under his command and the great risk involved by the possibility of the enemy becoming acquainted, through the woman, with the numbers of the detachment and its comparatively defenceless position.'³²⁴ The court proceedings was sent from Robinson (now Lord Rosmead) to the CO in London, and in his transmission, Rosmead stated that he did not believe the evidence given in the case was sufficient to prove that the woman was a spy, and emphasised that he considered that 'the proceedings were gravely irregular, inasmuch as the prisoner does not appear to have been informed either of the charge or sentence, or given a proper opportunity to defend herself.' Moreover, Rosmead believed that the execution of the woman was not 'entirely illegal' and that the proceedings should have the 'gravest censure', after which he generally supported Gibb's actions. Significant here is that he believed it deserved the 'gravest censure' and yet no punishment of those violating procedures. This indicates that the British authorities did not want such information to become public knowledge, which would smear the British Empire's image domestically and internationally alike.³²⁵ It therefore reveals that British officials did indeed suppress sensitive information and reports to safeguard their own

³²² Ibid., 3-4.

³²³ Ibid., 4.

³²⁴ Ibid., 10.

³²⁵ TNA: CO 879/47: Rosmead to Chamberlain, 3 October 1896, 1.

position and avoid political and public outcries. Indeed, it may be assumed this incident, which Chamberlain considered ‘a parody of justice’³²⁶, would have been a solid argument in the White Book to display British colonial vices.

On a whole, the conduct of imperial troops in Southern Rhodesia was under noticeable scrutiny from official circles. The importance of preventing accusations of mistreatment and excesses were pivotal to the legitimacy of the government’s intervention, but also to their agenda concerning Southern Rhodesia in the aftermath, as will be discussed later. Other cases of military officers breaking procedure occurred where rebel leaders such as Makoni and Uwini were both executed upon capture rather than being taken prisoner, which led to official inquiries into the matter. In the first case, Major Watts, who had shot Makoni, was lauded by the settlers in the district (Umtali) who sent a telegram with fifty signatures pleading for Watts to be exonerated.³²⁷ Again, the military situation was the defining factor that decided the outcome. Carrington had deemed that first, due to the terrain and ‘a superior number of well-armed natives of doubtful loyalty’ who would be ‘excited by the arrest of a great chief’ due to his relation to their own chief. This led Watts to take no risks regarding the ‘safety of his column.’ Secondly, had Makoni been rescued, it ‘would have done incalculable harm regards the suppression of the rising.’ Finally, bringing Makoni to a settlement would have delayed the confirmation of a court-martial and would demand an escort ‘stronger than the number of troops on the line of communication would admit without endangering the safety of posts and convoys.’ Carrington concluded that these considerations led Major Watts to the justifiable conviction ‘that the military exigencies of the case demanded prompt and vigorous action, and I am of the opinion that he acted to the best of his judgment in the interest of his force, and of the administration of the country.’³²⁸

Uwini was executed after a field-court-marshal overseen by Colonel Robert Baden-Powell in September 1896, having been sentenced to death on grounds of being in rebellion in arms against the crown and ‘inciting rebellion and murder.’ He was shot instantly. Just as in the case of Makoni, this was not in accordance with the procedures that officers had to follow in the event of capturing prisoners. Thus, it resulted in the order to ‘place Colonel Baden-Powell under open arrest’ and for a court of inquiry to begin.³²⁹ However, Baden-Powell’s arrest was postponed due to ‘vital military operations.’³³⁰ Baden-Powell’s illegal

³²⁶ Keppel-Jones, *Rhodes and Rhodesia*, 464

³²⁷ TNA: WO 32/5623: Inhabitants of Umtali to the High Commissioner, 14 September 1896, enclosure no. 12 in Rosmead to Chamberlain, 16 September 1896.

³²⁸ Ibid. p. 5

³²⁹ TNA: WO 32/5622: Rosmead to Chamberlain, 19 September 1896.

³³⁰ TNA: CO 879/47: Rosmead to Chamberlain, 22 September 1896.

action was soon exonerated, as the effect of Uwini's death had hampered the Ndebele war effort, which had also been the case with Makoni in Mashonaland.³³¹ Therefore, while the conduct of the troops came under scrutiny, the end always justified the means.

The British perception of the conflict, therefore, was one where their superiority was confirmed in the field, but remained fragile following the initial defeats at Fonseca's farm and Tuli Road. Going on the offensive, however, it became imperative to ensure that the war effort did not take excessive proportions because of potential anxieties among officers, whether due to technological superiority (Gibbs), supposed lack of troops (Watts) or personal hatred or desire for vengeance (Baden-Powell). This adheres to Schaller's observation that colonial violence often emerged out of situations where fear amongst the soldier was widespread.³³² In these cases, Gibbs and Watts both described their positions as being under threat, thus necessitating, in their view, violent measures to be taken in order to safeguard their position. Whenever the conduct of British troops did break proceedings, however, it was crucial to acquit the perpetrators and to suppress the circulation of potentially harmful reports.

The Hunt for the Molimo

The case of Uwini was special, as it also touched upon the perception of the rebel cause. According to a Native Commissioner, Val Gielgud, the killing of Uwini was not only positive but necessary, in the sense that it would send a strong message to the Ndebele, as Uwini was 'an Induna (chief or headman) appointed by the M'limo to compel the allegiance of the Maholi (A Ndebele clan) to his cause. He, as an Induna of the M'limo, worked upon the superstitious feelings of the people who attributed to him power of a more or less miraculous nature.'³³³ Hence, Gielgud sheds light on the reason why Uwini's death had such a positive effect: it signified that the British could kill a holy warrior, thus breaking 'native superstition.' Thus, the superstition that was believed to be a central cause for the rebellion remained a significant factor in how the British perceived the conflict and the Ndebele.

According to Ranger, the rebellion was centred around one crucial figure: the Molimo (or M'limo) priest who had induced the indunas to take up arms.³³⁴ Indeed, Ranger emphasises the spiritual aspects of Ndebele culture as a prime motive behind the rebellion where social and economic grievances were secondary. The Ndebele (and the Shona) had

³³¹ TNA: CO 879/47: Rosmead to Chamberlain, 22 December 1896.

³³² Schaller, 'From Conquest to Genocide', 311-12.

³³³ TNA: CO 879/47: Item C, enclosed in Rosmead to Chamberlain, 22 December 1896, 9.

³³⁴ Ranger, *Revolt in Southern Rhodesia*, 250.

found in the Molimo a spiritual leader whom they thought to be nearly divine and to have the power to turn bullets into water.³³⁵ For the British authorities, the Molimo was soon imagined to be the main instigator of the rebellion and it became an obsession for them to hunt him down and cut the head off the snake.³³⁶ Upon learning his whereabouts, American scout Frederick Burnham was sent out to assassinate the Molimo in what Keppel-Jones has called ‘an adventure worthy of Burnham’s wild western background.’ Supposedly Burnham sneaked into a cave and hid in the shadows before shooting the Molimo and escaping under pursuit.³³⁷ Incidentally, this event became one of widespread fame where depictions of the scouts as heroes venturing out to combat the superstitious and evil Molimo caught the imagination of a worldwide audience.³³⁸ Such perceptions of Ndebele culture reiterate the racial attitude prevalent in Britain at the time. Indeed, supposed African superstition was, in this case, reiterated as a factor that could not be doubted, as it had been empirically substantiated by various anthropological studies.³³⁹ The Molimo caught the imagination of the British officials, and also, after his assassination, the general public, as this particular event became a widely told story in children’s books and was an example for the Boy-Scout movement established by Baden-Powell.³⁴⁰

The Molimo continued to fascinate and capture the attention of the official mind until his death.³⁴¹ Therefore, while Ranger discloses the spiritual motivation from the perspective of the Ndebele rebels, it can actually be contended that this spiritual motivation was forceful for the British too, as they were convinced of its importance in the Ndebele spirit.³⁴² Indeed, Uwini’s death was a move to psychologically strike at the Ndebele will to fight, which adhered to the racial prejudices of the ‘native mind’ by removing the smokescreen of superstition that the Molimo had cast over the supposedly naïve Ndebele. Indeed, the Molimo was perceived by the British to be the embodiment of the superstitious nature of the Ndebele as a race: ‘Through trickery and deceit’, it was argued, the Molimo had

³³⁵ This has mostly been reiterated in context of the Maji-Maji rising in German East Africa in 1905. See Patrick Redmond, ‘Maji Maji in Ungoni: A Reappraisal of Existing Historiography’, *The International Journal of African Historical Studies*, 8, 3 (1975), 419. For the Rhodesian context see Allen Isaacman, ‘Social Banditry in Zimbabwe (Rhodesia) and Mozambique, 1894-1907: An Expression of Early Peasant Protest’, *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 4, 1 (1977), 16.

³³⁶ Ranger, *Revolt in Southern Rhodesia*, 185; 312.

³³⁷ Keppel-Jones, *Rhodes and Rhodesia*, 458.

³³⁸ The Mlimo was consistently mentioned whenever a newspaper reported on the war in Rhodesia. See, for instance, *The Morning Post*, 29 April 1896, *The Sheffield and Rotherham Independent*, 30 April 1896 reporting on African superstition and *The Leeds Mercury*, June 24, 1896, *The Daily News*, 26 June, 1896 and *The Standard*, 30 June 1896, reporting on American scout Burnham killing the Molimo.

³³⁹ See, for instance, Patrick Brantlinger, ‘Victorians and Africans: The Genealogy of the Myth of the Dark Continent’, *Critical Inquiry*, 12, 1 (1985), 187.

³⁴⁰ Hyam, *Britain’s Imperial Century*, 276.

³⁴¹ TNA: CO 879/47: Robinson to Chamberlain, 18 April 1896.

³⁴² Ranger, *Revolt in Southern Rhodesia*, 155.

gained acknowledgement and ‘the lower races hold him in the highest reverence, and this has induced them, acting under decree, to wipe out the whites.’³⁴³

According to the British authorities, the Molimo had given prophecies prior to the First Matabele War that ‘the white man would sit in Bulawayo’, and had also ‘foreseen’ the arrival of the rinderpest, although the British believed he had gained this information from emissaries further north of the Zambesi river. Furthermore, this source, being a complaint by the settlers in Southern Rhodesia, also contemplated that the quelling of the rebellion was not harsh enough and that the authorities should seek to make sure that such superstitious rumours did not spread like wildfire, as had been the case.³⁴⁴

African spirituality, however, was also at the centre of humanitarian critique. Echoing both the BSAC’s original charter and Article 6 of the Berlin Treaty, the APS stipulated that ‘the natives’ should be allowed to have their religion and serve their gods as they wanted, and that this would eventually end the rebellion. In a response to this, Colonel Martin argued that

Anyone who has had experience of Natives could tell him (Secretary Fox Bourne of the APS) that course would undoubtedly have had the effect of encouraging the Natives to cling the closer to their superstitions, and of fanning their religious frenzy, the result of which would, undoubtedly, have been far greater disasters to the white people than did befall them.³⁴⁵

Certainly, the concept of race and the idea of a civilising mission were at the core of the understanding of the Ndebele society and culture. But by reiterating the alleged superstitious nature of the Ndebele, it automatically painted a picture of the rebels as being fanatical, violent and savage, and thus impossible to convince of reason. This created a contrasting image where the assumed savage nature of the Ndebele not only legitimised the violent conduct of the British troops in both official and public circles but also caused excessive methods of dynamiting caves to be seen as a necessity to overcome this supposedly fanatical foe.

Dynamiting Caves: The Matopo Hills

In June 1896, the British imperial forces defeated the rebels at the battle of Umgusa, just outside Bulawayo. According to Terence Ranger, it was this carnage which caused the rebels to flee into the Matopo hills.³⁴⁶ The Matopos are to this day a place of culture, religion, and

³⁴³ TNA: CO 879/47: Cape Times, 10 July 1896: ‘M’Limo. How the War was Worked. A Rhodesian Complaint on the conduct of the War’, enclosed in Goodenough to Chamberlain 14 July 1896, 1.

³⁴⁴ Ibid., 2.

³⁴⁵ TNA: CO 879/47: Martin to Milner 20 April 1897, enclosed in Milner to Chamberlain, 13 May 1897, 6-7.

³⁴⁶ Ranger, *Revolt in Southern Rhodesia*, 176.

memory for both Africans and Europeans (for instance, they are home to Cecil Rhodes' burial site). Indeed, these hills have had a crucial role in the history of Southern Rhodesia and were a focal point for both the 1896 rebellion and the later bush wars in the 1960s and 1970s.³⁴⁷

The British forces pursued the rebels into the hills, and with a breakthrough on 20 July 1896, the main resistance was eventually broken and the Ndebele scattered throughout the hills into caves to wage a guerrilla war.³⁴⁸ This new nature of the conflict became problematic for the British forces because their Maxim guns and repeating rifles were relatively inefficient in this rough terrain and the caves provided excellent cover and concealment for the rebels, making it easy for the Ndebele to ambush. Indeed, Ranger even claims that the British forces were losing the war in the Matopos.³⁴⁹ Although no such indication can be found in the sources left by the Colonial and War Offices, it nonetheless remains clear that the Matopos presented a much more formidable threat to the British than before and it was here that they suffered the most casualties and the hardest fighting of the entire war. This caused Chamberlain and the CO to be anxious about the outcome and how long the war would drag out. Chamberlain therefore communicated to Robinson to make sure that the military preparations were sufficient because 'the history of war with South African natives contains several disasters.' These disasters could prove to be dire for the government and Chamberlain complained that:

...a disaster to the force attacking the Matopo Hills would probably entail the loss of life to very many of the White inhabitants of Matabeleland and Mashonaland, and would certainly entail the sending of an expeditionary force from the country. Public opinion would be certain to fix the responsibility for a disaster upon Her Majesty's Government and upon yourself.³⁵⁰

It was only just over a decade since General Gordon's defeat at Khartoum (1885) and the British disaster at Isandlwana during the Anglo-Zulu War (1879). These defeats had become myths and had caused immense pressure upon the British government to act thereon. Gordon's death, in particular, may have been a concern for Chamberlain, as it caused the government at the time to lose an election soon after.³⁵¹ Therefore he warned Robinson that

³⁴⁷ Terence Ranger, *Voices from the Rocks: Nature, Culture & History in the Matopos Hills of Zimbabwe* (Bloomington, 1999), 44.

³⁴⁸ Ranger, *Revolt in Southern Rhodesia*, 235.

³⁴⁹ Ranger, *Voices from the Rocks*, 69-70.

³⁵⁰ Chamberlain to Robinson, April 9, 1896, in BL: 008273709: British South Africa Company, *The '96 rebellions: Originally Published as the British South Africa Company Reports on the Native Disturbances in Rhodesia, 1896-97* (Bulawayo, 1975), 14.

³⁵¹ Berny Sèbe, 'Imperial Heroes and Domestic Politics' in Berny Sèbe (ed.), *Heroic Imperialists in Africa: The Promotion of British and French Colonial Heroes, 1870-1939* (Manchester, 2013), 159-160.

‘the more full and careful your local preparations are the more relieved public opinion will be here, and the less pressure will be put on Her Majesty’s Government to send out reinforcements.’³⁵² Thus, there was governmental pressure on the military officers to make sure that defeat was not an option. This pressure from Whitehall may have caused Carrington to apply ruthless tactics of blowing up caves:

...regarding the attack on caves. These are generally situated in mountains and require many more men for their capture than our small columns can supply. The columns have to do, and have, I think, done the best they could under the circumstances. Very little reliance can be placed on most newspaper reports... I believe that where possible the rebels should be driven out or blocked in their caves.³⁵³

This meant the use of dynamite whenever the forces were fighting rebels hiding in caves. Whilst this contests Ranger’s claim about the British losing the war in the Matopos, it also implies the ruthless nature of the war: using dynamite against caves where women and children were hiding is a noteworthy disregard for human life. Alarmed by the potential scandal that could arise from this, Chamberlain sent a telegram to High Commissioner Rosmead regarding the use of dynamite in which he stated that ‘I presume that, in all cases where caves are blown up, ample opportunity is first afforded for the surrender of the occupants, and for the escape of women and children in the event of a refusal to surrender.’³⁵⁴ Rosmead never truly replied, as this was part of a larger telegram concerning other important matters as well. Yet, it does indicate that even from the view of the official mind, this practice was somehow considered inhumane and frowned upon.

While Chamberlain was initially concerned with the possibility of a defeat and the impact it would have on public opinion, the tactic employed to avoid exactly that also sparked public critique. Indeed, the dynamiting of the caves was considered an excessive method by many: both the public and humanitarian groups. Mr W. Evans wrote in October 1896 to the CO about the reports he had read in *The Pall Mall Gazette* regarding a certain Captain Pease who had besieged a cave and used dynamite in doing so.³⁵⁵ The newspaper sought to depict Pease as a hero of the empire, yet Evans complained that ‘I protest, as an Englishman, against the use of dynamite in war against people who have only been fighting for their own country, instinctively.’³⁵⁶ The CO took little time to respond to Evans and in doing so made known their official stance on the use of dynamite: ‘The use of mines [dynamite] is a necessary

³⁵² Chamberlain to Robinson, April 9, 1896, in British South Africa Company, *The '96 rebellions*, 14.

³⁵³ TNA: WO 32/5623: Carrington to High Commissioner, 1 September 1896, enclosure no. 7 in Lord Rosmead to Chamberlain, 9 September 1896.

³⁵⁴ TNA: CO 879/47: Chamberlain to Rosmead, 23 October 1896.

³⁵⁵ *The Pall Mall Gazette*, 21 October 1896.

³⁵⁶ TNA: CO 879/47: W. Evans to CO, 13 October 1896.

incident of warfare, and to state that Mr Chamberlain has no reason to suppose that the proceedings to which you refer were inconsistent with the ordinary usages of civilised nations.³⁵⁷

British strategies were therefore consistently under scrutiny. From the perspective of the official mind, it was a choice between a possible defeat in the Matopos and then facing the public critique hereof, or instead, applying ruthless methods which were to cause much resentment amongst the public and humanitarian groups but could, they were convinced, secure victory and possibly minimising expenses. They chose the latter, which had terrible consequences for the Ndebele, as it served to increase the violence and barbarism of the war. The ruthless strategy of dynamiting caves was one which the German delegation at Versailles could point to as an example of British excesses. However, whereas the German conduct in GSWA was genocidal, the brutal actions of the British in Southern Rhodesia were not. The mere scale and barbarism of the 1896 rebellion was far less brutal than that of the Herero and Nama genocide, which was organised and actively sought the extermination of the so-called lesser races. The strategy employed by the British of dynamiting caves and burning kraals was certainly brutal, but is better understood as a case of total war where the Ndebele were to be completely subjugated, rather than a genocide where the extermination of the Ndebele was the aim.

The bloody fighting in the Matopos did eventually lead to peace in Matabeleland. However, the road to peace was somewhat peculiar because the British themselves were split into three factions: the government, the BSAC, and the settlers. The initiative for peace talks came from Cecil Rhodes himself, who went to the Matopos and discussed peace terms with the Ndebele indunas without the backing of the government.³⁵⁸ This spectacular moment was lauded by many as an act of heroism by Rhodes, but it sparked anger among officials in Whitehall and South Africa because they believed that since they, after all, were the ones engaged in quelling the rebellion, they should be involved in these peace talks and more or less dictate them.³⁵⁹ Colonel Martin particularly was upset about Rhodes' initiative and argued that the government should simply swoop in and take over the peace talks, whether Rhodes liked it or not. In fact, Martin, who came to play such a crucial role in the post-war affairs,

³⁵⁷ TNA: CO 879/47: Edward Fairfield to Evans, 22 October 1896.

³⁵⁸ Ranger, *Voices from the Rocks*, 72.

³⁵⁹ TNA: WO 32/5623: 'Operations in Matabeleland and Mashonland', enclosure no. 18 in Deputy Commissioner, Bulawayo to the Acting High Commissioner, Cape Town, 24 August 1896 in Goodenough to Chamberlain, 26 August 1896.

generally disliked Rhodes and the entire BSAC and supposedly this resentment was returned.³⁶⁰

In early August 1896 hundreds of rebels began to gradually surrender as the tide of war changed against their favour.³⁶¹ However, according to Lt. General Goodenough, many more were ready to surrender but 'are withheld by the Indunas.' The government had on 4 July 1896 issued an amnesty proclamation in which all the rebel fighters could peacefully come in and lay down their arms and could, if they had not been involved in the murder of any white settlers, be allowed to leave.³⁶² However, this did not extend to the indunas, and particularly not to those who had ordered the attacks on white settlers.³⁶³ Therefore, the indunas had no interest in surrendering on these terms and continued to fight. The amnesty proclamation also clearly defined the areas still considered to be in rebellion as well as the penalty for remaining in arms against the British Empire. The government sought to end the rebellion by appealing to the lower parts of the Ndebele hierarchy which would see the indunas removed from power after the rebellion. Rhodes, however, went straight for the elites to consolidate and to reach a status quo of power relations relative to the future of Southern Rhodesia so that the BSAC could continue to conduct its business without much interference from the government and Ndebele alike, as the indunas could be the key to secure both worthwhile peace and a steady supply of labour in the future.

Rhodes' peace negotiations, however, whilst being very unpopular with the officials, were appreciated by the imperial troops fighting in the Matopos because of the stalemate they were experiencing. This meant that while Rhodes had previously made contact in secret and initiated the negotiations, these negotiations were now out in the open.³⁶⁴ During the later stages of Rhodes' negotiations, Carrington gave the order to the officers in the Matopos to 'avoid any offensive movement against the rebels pending settlement of questions of surrender.'³⁶⁵ Ultimately, it ended with Rhodes successfully negotiating peace with the indunas, thus removing the main point of resistance of the rebellion, yet the war was not over: several indunas and their loyal followers could never submit to the conditions, as they would undoubtedly face the penalty of death.³⁶⁶ The result of the peace was that the Ndebele

³⁶⁰ Ranger, *Revolt in Southern Rhodesia*, 251.

³⁶¹ Keppel-Jones, *Rhodes and Rhodesia*, 465.

³⁶² TNA: CO 879/47: Goodenough to Chamberlain, 8 August 1896. Also, TNA: WO 33/117: Operations in Southern Rhodesia, Confidential Report by Captain H.S. Walker, 1898, 54-55.

³⁶³ Ranger, *Revolt in Southern Rhodesia*, 238.

³⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 240.

³⁶⁵ TNA: CO 879/47: Carrington to High Commissioner, 28 August 1896, enclosure no. 2 in Rosmead to Chamberlain, 16 September 1896, 3.

³⁶⁶ Ranger, *Revolt in Southern Rhodesia*, 245.

surrendered en masse and only two indunas, Mkwati and Makumbi, continued the struggle due to their involvement in the killing of settlers. This partial surrender meant that many, but not all of the Ndebele surrendered and that those who sought to surrender and lay down their arms were threatened and often killed by the remaining rebels in order to keep them fighting the British.³⁶⁷

During the negotiations, however, the indunas had supposedly talked about the ill-treatment by the Native Commissioners and Native Police, the seizure of cattle and other wrongs against them.

The defects of company administration of which the indunas now so bitterly complained were in fact very much due to Rhodes himself, to his sense of priorities, to his choice of men, to his tolerance of the rough and ready method. But now he... tried to imagine the Ndebele situation, he was able to demonstrate, and even to feel, surprised, shock at the particular allegations made. He had not, after all, willed that these things should happen.³⁶⁸

Based on this, Ranger contends that Rhodes subsequently promised the indunas that such ill-treatment would never happen again.³⁶⁹ However, most of the settlers, having been the victims of massacres by the Ndebele in the initial stage of the rebellion, were nothing short of furious with the softness shown by Rhodes in these peace talks.³⁷⁰

The negotiations that ended the rebellion had, according to Ranger, done more to settle the 'native question' than the preceding years of company rule. After 1893, the indunas were ignored and never consulted; now they were an authority, as in the old days under Lobengula, albeit with the central power being the BSAC. The issue of the power allocated to the indunas after the war remained a crucial aspect for the BSAC. Albert Grey, who had then recently been appointed Administrator of Southern Rhodesia as an employee by the BSAC, informed Rhodes' solicitor, Bouchier Hawksley, that the BSAC had, by granting privileges to the indunas, 'taken the best means open to us to secure the contentment of the natives and the continuance of peace.'³⁷¹ Grey was at the time generally considered to be in the pocket of Rhodes himself.³⁷² Perhaps that was why Grey assured the CO and Chamberlain that the BSAC would henceforth seek to accommodate the needs of the Ndebele and Shona as much as possible so that it 'will be satisfactory even to the Aborigines Protection Society.'³⁷³ Moreover, Grey believed that the way in which they had won the war

³⁶⁷ Ibid., 259-61.

³⁶⁸ Ibid., 245-6.

³⁶⁹ Ibid., 246.

³⁷⁰ Ibid., 258.

³⁷¹ TNA: CO 879/47: Grey to Bouchier Hawksley in Hawksley to Graham, 16 October 1896, 1.

³⁷² Travis Crosby, *Chamberlain: A Most Radical Imperialist* (London, 2011), 134.

³⁷³ Ibid., 2.

in a few months, with supposedly few costs, was outright impressive, and suggested 'someone to be commissioned to make out a return, showing the comparative cost of the various Imperial wars in South Africa.'³⁷⁴ In many ways, the imperial practices implemented to quell the rebellion showed the nature of imperialism and the manner in which the official mind dealt with it: complete confidence and superiority in every action carried out. Yet, the interests of the government and the BSAC consistently clashed during the rebellion, which made for individual actions being taken and pulled the future of Southern Rhodesia in two separate directions: towards the intentions of the BSAC on the one hand and the intentions of the government on the other.

The Jameson Raid: The BSAC and Government Relations in an International Context

The Jameson Raid in 1895 was the pretext for the Ndebele rebellion in 1896 and a significant event in the increasing antagonism between Britain and the Boer republics, and thus had a profound influence on the relationship between the Company and the government. Before discussing how the government sought to ratify company rule after the 1896 rebellion, it is crucial first to ascertain how the Jameson Raid had complicated company-government relations in an international context. Indeed, as will be shown, the post-rebellion situation was embedded in the international scandal that followed the raid and saw imperial and foreign interests being intertwined.

The raid itself took place on 29 December 1895. The plan was to simply move into the Transvaal and aid the British citizens (the *uitlanders*) who were to take up arms. Thereby the raid was supposed to appear as an act of support for the disenfranchised British citizens in the Boer republics. Preparations for this rebellion had been planned well in advance and weapons had been smuggled into the Transvaal. However, the *uitlanders* never rose in a coordinated effort: some did and others did not, and so a full-blown rebellion in Johannesburg never materialised. Eventually, the raid failed and Jameson and his men were trapped at Doornkop, where they surrendered on 1 January 1896.³⁷⁵

To this day, there is much uncertainty regarding the actual circumstances and the immediate reactions to the raid. It is generally believed that the raid was planned and thought up by Rhodes himself, partly because he was director of the BSAC and partly because the

³⁷⁴ Ibid., 3-4.

³⁷⁵ For a detailed description of these events see Wesseling, *Divide and Rule*, 304-7.

subsequent parliamentary inquiry deemed it so. However, upon hearing that Jameson had assembled and moved out, Rhodes sent him two letters urging him to turn around. There is therefore still a substantial reason to question who the main culprit behind the move actually was. The British government was also involved, if not directly, then indirectly. Hercules Robinson was believed to have been in the pocket of Rhodes and the BSAC and had helped to draft the plan. For Chamberlain, the matter remains more complicated, as his involvement is still unclear. It remains certain, however, that Chamberlain and the British government, if not directly involved, were kept well-informed of the plans.³⁷⁶ Soon after the news broke, Chamberlain communicated to President Paul Kruger of the Transvaal to repudiate the raid and any government involvement. However, there are suggestions that Chamberlain himself was indeed aware of the upcoming raid, albeit not directly involved in its planning. Liberal MP Henry Labouchere was convinced of Chamberlain's involvement and demanded exposure of all documents on the matter, accusing him of 'mixing up political and business interests.'³⁷⁷ However, he was unsuccessful, as many documents that could prove the involvement of Chamberlain and other officials were likely to have been destroyed.

Chamberlain, nicknamed 'pushful Joe' due to his hard-driving and stern behaviour, was a radical when it came to domestic politics; however, in terms of foreign and colonial policy, he was a classical imperialist who ardently advocated the importance and future expansion of the empire.³⁷⁸ Travis Crosby contends that the main problem in Chamberlain and Rhodes' hostile relationship was that they were too similar in that they were both independent individuals with an insatiable lust for power and control. In 1895, Rhodes and the BSAC had requested that the Bechuanaland Protectorate be ceded to the Company, which only rendered Chamberlain suspicious of Rhodes' intentions towards the Boer republics.³⁷⁹ Eventually, the request was declined, after three Batawana chiefs – Khama, Bathoen, and Sebele – had travelled to London and spoken against the potential company takeover. Nevertheless, the raid eventually started from Bechuanaland territory, prompting further suspicion as to the British government's involvement.³⁸⁰

Such suspicions were serious, especially if central figures in the government in London were accomplices. It would mean that it was Britain as a sovereign nation and not a

³⁷⁶ Ibid., 306.

³⁷⁷ Bösch, "'Are we a cruel nation?'" , 123.

³⁷⁸ Crosby, *Chamberlain*, 2.

³⁷⁹ Ibid., 132-33.

³⁸⁰ Myles Osborne and Susan Kent, *Africans and Britons in the Age of Empires, 1660-1980* (London, 2015), 122-23.

renegade private company that had unjustly attacked another sovereign nation.³⁸¹ Around Europe, Britain was smeared in newspapers and regarded as a bullying superpower with expansionistic ambitions: this was later echoed in the famous speech by Prime Minister Salisbury on the 'living and dying nations' in 1898, where countries such as the Transvaal were doomed to be absorbed by the empires.³⁸² Consequently, the Transvaal received much sympathy from other small countries or 'dying nations'. For instance, the conservative and usually pro-British Danish newspaper *Jyllandsposten* lamented Britain for 'having been too greedy in the Transvaal' and having, because of the raid, been weakened by criticism from Germany and France. Furthermore, it was reported that rumours in Germany suggested that the Boers had burned Jameson and his men alive and that this would soon result in war.³⁸³ Of course, such rumours were false, but they illustrate the international attention and euphoria when it came to international and colonial scandals. Indeed, the raid captivated an international audience and made Britain out to be a greedy leviathan, similar to how Germany was portrayed in 1918.

In Germany, sympathy for the Boer republics was widespread both among the public and in the Reichstag. The German ambassador in London was even instructed to 'ask whether the British Government approves of the crossing of the frontier of the Transvaal State by the Chartered Company's troops' and 'if you have the impression that the infraction of International Law is approved, you will ask for your passports.'³⁸⁴ The Jameson Raid, therefore, placed significant strain on Anglo-German relations as well. Not only in terms of the raid itself, because upon hearing of the failure of the raid, Kaiser Wilhelm II sent a telegram to Kruger congratulating him on defeating the 'armed hordes that invaded your country as disturbers of peace.'³⁸⁵ This so-called Kruger telegram illustrates the importance of the raid and the wider regional and international scandal that followed. Indeed, it is considered a momentous event in the growing antagonism between Britain and the Boer republics, but also between Britain and Germany leading up to the First World War. German sympathy and later support for the Boers during the South African War sparked the bonfires

³⁸¹ Deryck Schreuder and Jeffrey Butler (eds.), *Sir Graham Bower's Secret History of the Jameson Raid and the South African Crisis, 1895-1902* (Cape Town, 2002), xx.

³⁸² The speech received much international attention and was commented on in newspapers worldwide. See, for instance, *The Spectator*, 7 May, 1898 and even the *San Francisco Call*, 15 May 1898.

³⁸³ *Jyllandsposten*, 1 January 1896.

³⁸⁴ Baron von Marschall to Count Hatzfeldt, 31 December 1895 in E.T.S Dugdale, *German Diplomatic Documents, 1871-1914*, Vol. II (London, 1929), 377.

³⁸⁵ For the Kruger telegram see http://germanhistorydocs.ghi-dc.org/sub_document.cfm?document_id=754 (Accessed June 9 2015).

of jingoism in Britain against Germany.³⁸⁶ While the sentiment towards Britain around Europe was negative, it was ambiguous at best within Britain itself. Jameson and Rhodes were of course criticised and demands for repercussions demanded. However, in the face of the denunciations, it created a sense of national loyalty, as the actions of the Kaiser were refuted and condemned. Because of these international repercussions, the Jameson Raid placed severe strain on the relationship between the government and the BSAC. At the time, the Transvaal had gradually become less dependent on British and Cape imports because of the German presence in GSWA and the completion of the Pretoria-Delagoa Railway in 1895.³⁸⁷ In 1893 Britain supplied 80% of its imports and Germany a mere 14%. However, by 1897, Britain was supplying 64% and Germany a sizeable 32%.³⁸⁸ Therefore, the raid not only created a bad image of Britain, but also furnished German influence and sympathy in the region as well as permanently ruining Britain's relationship with the Transvaal.³⁸⁹

The Jameson Raid was so badly received by the government that it directly threatened to dissolve the BSAC: 'If the Company were privy to Jameson's marauding behaviour... Her Majesty's Government would at once have to face a demand for the revocation of the Charter and the dissolution of the corporation.'³⁹⁰ But criticism at home and abroad demanded a scapegoat. The *Jyllandsposten* asked, 'as Napoleon was exiled to Elba – will the same happen to Rhodes?'³⁹¹ To mitigate public opinion at home and abroad, the British government created a Parliamentary Committee, headed by Chamberlain (since he was the Secretary of Colonies), to inquire into the Jameson Raid and by extension the causes of 1896 rebellion.³⁹² This inquiry was famously called 'the great lying of state in Westminster.'³⁹³ The inquiry was not just aimed at Jameson and Rhodes, but also indirectly at Chamberlain and the CO in general, since it had been contended that they were somehow involved.³⁹⁴

Many of the still existing views on the involvement of the CO are based on missing telegrams, which can only be assumed to have been burnt after Rhodes' death in 1902, as these would definitively prove whether or not the CO was involved in the Jameson Raid.

³⁸⁶ Steven Wai-Meng Siak, 'Germanophilism in Britain: Non-Governmental Elites and the Limits to Anglo-German Antagonism, 1905-1914' (London School of Economics and Political Science, D. Phil Thesis, 1997), 24-25.

³⁸⁷ See J. J. Van-Helten, 'German Capital, the Netherlands Railway Company and the Political Economy of the Transvaal 1886-1900', *The Journal of African History*, 19, 3 (1978).

³⁸⁸ James Belich, *Replenishing the Earth. The Settler Revolution and the Rise of the Anglo-World, 1783-1939* (Oxford, 2009), 381.

³⁸⁹ Palley, *The Constitutional History*, 128.

³⁹⁰ TNA: CO 417/160: CO to BSAC, 31 December 1895.

³⁹¹ *Jyllandsposten*, 8 January 1896.

³⁹² The Annual Report of the Aborigines Protection Society, 1897, 6.

³⁹³ TNA: CO 879/47: Robinson to Chamberlain, 10 March 1896.

³⁹⁴ Crosby, *Chamberlain*, 135-36.

Graham Bower, who was secretary to the High Commissioner to South Africa when the raid happened, remained an ardent critic of the inquiry and of the raid. In his edited memoirs, Bower claimed that he had been censured in his statements at the inquiry and that the whole affair was a farce. Indeed, Bower argued, Chamberlain, who was in effect also on trial, picked the members of the jury and eventually included himself. This, and the general scandal that had arisen, meant according to Bower that the case was similar to the contemporary Dreyfus affair in France, which had also caused a political scandal.³⁹⁵

The inquiry and the entire 'blame-game' incurred by the Jameson Raid and the subsequent 1896 rebellion was also part of the wider geopolitical interests of Southern Africa.³⁹⁶ The BSAC was strategically nothing short of indispensable for the consolidation of British influence and power in the region at a time where particularly German expansion was seen as a possible threat to Britain's dominance of the Southern African interior and its policy towards the Boer Republics. Therefore, this inquiry did not have any wider repercussions for either Chamberlain or Rhodes on a larger scale. Considering that the raid had inexorably broken international law by attacking a then neutral state, they both escaped rather easily.³⁹⁷ Eventually, the inquiry committee completely exonerated Chamberlain and partially exonerated Hercules Robinson, who was instead exhibited as having been complicit but unknowing. Although Jameson had led the raid, he was not condemned by many: in fact, the great poet of the day, Rudyard Kipling, wrote the poem *If* in Jameson's honour as a hero of the British Empire. The big loser in the inquiry was Rhodes, who was deemed the main culprit, and ultimately it ended in his resignation as Prime Minister of the Cape Colony in 1896 and later as Managing Director for the BSAC, although he was reinstated by the stakeholders two years later.³⁹⁸ In contrast, Chamberlain came out of the inquiry in a stronger position than that in which he had entered it. As the entire CO was under suspicion, Chamberlain now had the opportunity to revamp the entire personnel. Most notably, this led to the appointment of Alfred Milner – whom Crosby describes as a man 'cut in Chamberlain's mould'³⁹⁹ – as High Commissioner to South Africa in April 1897.

The geopolitical threat that the Transvaal posed to British South Africa was undoubtedly serious, and according to many scholars, including Robinson and Gallagher, it threatened to

³⁹⁵ Schreuder and Butler, *Sir Graham Bower's Secret History*, 122.

³⁹⁶ For a contemporary and detailed description of the proceedings, see *The Standard*, 20 February 1897, 4.

³⁹⁷ Crosby, *Chamberlain*, 137-39.

³⁹⁸ Antoinette Burton (ed.), *Politics and Empire: A Reader* (London, 2001), 275. See also Crosby, *Chamberlain*, 140-141 and Louis Raphael, *The Cape to Cairo Dream: A study in British imperialism*, 2nd ed. [orig. 1936] (New York, 1973), 188.

³⁹⁹ Crosby, *Chamberlain*, 142.

turn Southern Africa away from the British Empire.⁴⁰⁰ However, to prevent this, Whitehall could only seek to keep its influence intact by pointing to the *uitlander* question and rely on the support of Southern Rhodesia. These became focal-points in the increasingly hostile Boer-British tensions that culminated with the outbreak of war in 1899.⁴⁰¹ The Jameson Raid, therefore, remains a crucial event in order to comprehend how British officials perceived colonial rule in Southern Rhodesia and GSWA because of the involvement of the BSAC and the provocations made by Germany and the Kaiser. The affair deeply affected the relations between the BSAC and the government and cast the British Empire into a scandal domestically and internationally. There were therefore international and domestic pressures to scrutinise the BSAC and its administration of Southern Rhodesia. Thus, the parliamentary committee was not only intended to provide a scapegoat and exonerate the British government from complicity in the raid and the scandal it had caused, but also as a way to put company rule in Southern Rhodesia, as a whole, under scrutiny. Indeed, there were clear indications that the British Government, and especially the joint Prime Minister and Foreign Secretary, Lord Salisbury, had, according to a German diplomat, suggested he did not wish 'to increase further the authority and power of Cecil Rhodes.'⁴⁰² Therefore, the Jameson Raid was a pretext for a governmental inquiry into the affairs of the Company and a way to build a case to try and put Rhodes and the BSAC on a leash that would keep them committed to the agenda and interests of the British Empire. This served as a double-edged sword to curb international criticism by exonerating the British government and to further official interests and control of Southern Africa as a whole, as opposed to Rhodes and the BSAC claiming further influence and power. Therefore, in 1896, the BSAC had not only caused an international scandal, prompting heavy criticism of the government, but had also dragged the government into a colonial war. It was therefore inviting for the British officials to curb the power and influence of the BSAC to avoid being drawn into any future problems and to make sure it remained in line with imperial policies.

⁴⁰⁰ Robinson and Gallagher, *Africa and the Victorians*, 410.

⁴⁰¹ Ibid., 460-61.

⁴⁰² Hatzfeld to Baron von Holstein, Auswärtiges Amt, 1 January, 1896 in Dugdale, *German Diplomatic Documents*, 381.

Causes of the Rebellion: Company Rule under Scrutiny

Since the government had been dragged into a colonial war and faced the scandal that arose out of the Jameson Raid, it now sought to investigate the affairs of the BSAC. The causes of the rebellion were at the crux of this investigation, as it would reveal whether company rule had violated the terms upon which it was legitimised. After the First Matabele War, the privileges of the BSAC in ruling Southern Rhodesia had been laid down in the Matabeleland Order in Council of 1894 (Henceforth the 1894 Order). This order constituted the terms of the defeated Ndebele and their new position under company rule and was in effect a Versailles treaty of Matabeleland. In 1893, the British government decided that since it was the BSAC that had waged the war, this justified company rule in Matabeleland. Furthermore, they had little judicial reason and no political mandate to refuse Rhodes and the Company the expansion of its borders to the south. Therefore, to avoid laying an unexpected and unwanted additional cost upon the British taxpayer and potentially antagonising pro-company supporters in Southern Africa, the British government decided against the annexation of Matabeleland. In fact, the government's mandate to negotiate the terms of Matabeleland was so weak in 1893 that they dropped their only real demand of having a government official residing in Bulawayo when Rhodes opposed it.⁴⁰³ Eventually, John Moffat was appointed to report to the government on affairs in Matabeleland, but he was to be paid by the BSAC and was of little use to inform the CO of anything, leaving it with no eyes or ears on the ground.⁴⁰⁴ Indeed, as Keppel-Jones rightly observes, the stance of the CO after 1893 was to seek 'power without responsibility', and in this they failed.⁴⁰⁵

This resulted in the 1894 Order effectively being a *carte blanche* for the BSAC in governing Matabeleland. In theory, however, company rule was subjected to the government's approval whenever new ordinances and regulations were to be passed, especially those concerning 'native policies'. The British government had indeed inserted specific clauses intended to protect the indigenous peoples from exploitation and, most importantly, from conditions comparable to slavery. It was therefore a provision in the 1894 Order that any such new regulations had to be approved by the Secretary of State for the Colonies, the High Commissioner to South Africa or, alternatively, the Secretary of State.⁴⁰⁶

⁴⁰³ Palley, *The Constitutional History*, 113-14.

⁴⁰⁴ Casper Andersen, 'Handelskompagniet British South Africa Company som ikke-statslig voldsaktør, 1889-1994' in Mikkel Thorup and Morten Brønder (eds.), *Antiterrorismens Idéhistorie. Stater og Vold i 500 år* (Aarhus, 2007), 114.

⁴⁰⁵ Keppel-Jones, *Rhodes and Rhodesia*, 320. Also cited in Parry, 'Review: Rhodes and Rhodesia...'.⁴⁰⁶

⁴⁰⁶ Palley, *The Constitutional History*, 115-16.

On paper, these may seem to be stringent terms of imperial control from London, but since Whitehall had no real eyes on the ground, they were effectively unable to monitor whether such policies were followed.⁴⁰⁷

One of the failures of the 1894 Order was that it did not pragmatically consider the economic premises upon which the BSAC was conducting its affairs. This included demands for cheap labour and the gradual expropriation of Ndebele lands and cattle, as will be discussed below. By setting down a set of rules which the BSAC was to follow and refer to, the government did indeed seek some degree of control; however, it maintained a certain distance in its way of doing so. As Palley rightly contends, ‘despite the elements of imperial control enumerated, the CO’s intention was to permit the Company to exercise its power freely.’⁴⁰⁸ Several reasons may have swayed the CO to decide to take such a laissez-faire approach: both geopolitical interests of not antagonising pro-BSAC elements in Southern Africa, and also not stirring public opinion and laying an additional burden upon the taxpayer for a new colony which they had not even acquired themselves. Thus, after 1893, the government were more than willing to leave the administration of Matabeleland to the Company. As John Galbraith has concluded, ‘between 1889 and 1896, the Chartered Company was an engine without a governor.’⁴⁰⁹

This nearly unrestricted power in Matabeleland rendered it possible for the BSAC to introduce no less than five ordinances in 1895 alone, primarily for the purpose of imposing hut-taxes on the Ndebele.⁴¹⁰ These hut taxes were resented among the Ndebele, both because of the tax in itself and also because it was collected by Africans who in many cases belonged to tribes and clans that had been subjugated by the Ndebele prior to 1893. This showcases the ignorance of the BSAC towards African social cultures, as it was a significant humiliation and grievance for the Ndebele which may certainly have incited them to rebel in 1896.

Nevertheless, by not establishing itself as a presence in Matabeleland, nor demanding any real influence or receiving timely reports from the BSAC in its administration, the British government fell to a role on the fringes, functioning at best as a verifying entity with no real power or clear purpose. Although there was a long and renowned history of company-based imperialism in India with the East India Company, it was very different in this case, because in Matabeleland the government never fully acknowledged the economic premises of company rule. The Ndebele and later governmental disregard of the administration of

⁴⁰⁷ Galbraith, *Crown and Charter*, 315.

⁴⁰⁸ Palley, *The Constitutional History*, 119.

⁴⁰⁹ Galbraith, *Crown and Charter*, 339.

⁴¹⁰ Palley, *The Constitutional History*, 120-21.

Matabeleland, therefore, partly resulted from Whitehall's lack of will and interest, but also of understanding of the real situation in Southern Rhodesia. This lack of understanding of the BSACs premises, interests and intentions paved the way for the BSAC to reach a position where it had the opportunity to implement regulations that would eventually question the moral foundations of the British Empire.

Cattle Administration after 1893

After the mining industry, Southern Rhodesia's most important economy was cattle herding.⁴¹¹ It was believed that the BSAC had by the end of 1895 seized about half of the Ndebele cattle. This rendered the government rather suspicious towards to the BSAC because the seizing of cattle may not only have been a reason for rebellion, but might also have been in direct violation of the principles laid out in the BSAC's privileges in administering Southern Rhodesia, thus harming the already complicated relationship between the BSAC and the government.⁴¹²

Deputy Commissioner, Colonel Richard Martin was commissioned to compile a report on the causes of the rebellion that examined various aspects of company administration in Matabeleland, where the seizure of cattle was one of the main issues addressed. In essence, what Martin was looking for in his report was whether the BSAC had violated its powers and privileges of the 1894 Order. It is important to note how the 1894 Order, as a revision of the original charter made in the wake of the First Matabele War, directly dealt with the issue of cattle and the general livelihood of the Ndebele. In fact, it obliged the BSAC to provide sufficient 'land, cattle and resources' to sustain the livelihood of the defeated Ndebele. A central allegation put forward in Martin's report, therefore, was that the BSAC was in violation of the obligations outlined in the 1894 Order.⁴¹³

Naturally, even before Martin had finished his report, Whitehall had its postulations of what reasons lay behind the rebellion. In a telegram to Rosmead, Chamberlain stated that the report Martin was compiling would give him more insight into the events and the responsibility of the BSAC in the outbreak and that 'the report will of course deal with cattle and labour questions and any personal grievances of Matabele.' Therefore, the government had noteworthy suspicions about the conduct – or rather, misconduct – of the BSAC prior to the rebellion. Yet, this was not all emanating from newly uncovered incidents of

⁴¹¹ For a detailed economic history hereof see Ian Phimister, 'Meat and Monopolies: Beef Cattle in Southern Rhodesia, 1890-1938', *The Journal of African History*, 19, 3 (1978).

⁴¹² TNA: CO 879/47: Chamberlain to Goodenough, 18 June 1896.

⁴¹³ TNA: DO 119/521: Matabeleland Order in Council, 18 July 1894, Article 49.

maladministration, for the officials in London were aware of the seizure of cattle and the labour regulations before 1896: they simply did not have conclusive evidence for it; nor did they have a motive to act on it.⁴¹⁴ This can only be contended, not proven, yet in another case – that of the Tati Concession Ltd., a similar company based in neighbouring Bechuanaland – the picture was quite different. In March 1896, as the first reports of rebellion in Matabeleland came in, the CO directly instructed the Tati Concession Ltd. to be more ‘discreet’ and careful in seizing cattle from ‘the natives’ to avoid a repetition or spread of the rebellion in nearby Matabeleland. Moreover, there were prevalent concerns that such practices could be a point of criticism of colonial administration.⁴¹⁵

On the matter of seizing cattle, Martin emphasised it as being a grievance and thus a direct cause for the Ndebele to take up arms. The BSAC had erroneously supposed that the entire stock of Ndebele cattle under Lobengula had been the property of the King, and therefore, after the BSAC had won the war in 1893, that it was theirs by right of conquest.⁴¹⁶ Cattle were therefore initially herded to be counted by the BSAC and were subsequently systematically distributed back to the Ndebele as a part of the 1894 Order. Not only did this incur a prolonged timespan where the Ndebele had been deprived of their main livelihood, it also coincided with the outbreak of rinderpest:

By this distribution 40,930 cattle, in most of which the natives up to that time had only milking rights, were given over to the natives as their absolute property. The distribution was almost accomplished by the time the rinderpest broke out.⁴¹⁷

The combination of the seizing of cattle and the rinderpest led the Ndebele to believe that none of this was accidental, but premeditated by the British. The rinderpest left cattle stocks scarce, and when the BSAC continued to seize whatever cattle remained, it caused starvation, which spawned further resentment among the Ndebele.⁴¹⁸

The BSAC’s assumption that all cattle had been theirs by right of conquest was criticised by Martin as being wrong and unjust, as the Company had simply assumed all cattle to have been Lobengula’s, as they were faced with difficulties in distinguishing the ownership of various herds. The assumption therefore conveniently solved this problem and put the Company in control of the entire cattle stock of Matabeleland. Yet, as has already been

⁴¹⁴ TNA: CO 879/47: Chamberlain to Rosmead, 9 December 1896.

⁴¹⁵ TNA: CO 879/52: CO to Tati Concession Ltd., 18 March 1896.

⁴¹⁶ TNA: CO 879/47: Colonel Richard Martin, Report on Question B (cattle), enclosed in Rosmead to Chamberlain, 2 February 1897, 6-7.

⁴¹⁷ TNA: CO 879/47: Goodenough to Chamberlain, 26 June 1896.

⁴¹⁸ TNA: CO 879/47: Robinson to Chamberlain, 16 April 1896.

mentioned, this news was not new to Whitehall. According to Palley, the government had in 1893-4 consented to all cattle being the Company's by right of conquest.⁴¹⁹ Whereas it was seen as unproblematic in 1893-4, government inaction was rapidly swept under the carpet after the 1896 rebellion and instead protracted as maladministration, purely being the result of company rule with no mention of official consent.

Immediately after the war in 1893, many cattle herds had remained under the supervision of different clans and groups until a final decision had been made. However, when the decision to claim all the cattle had been made, each induna was required to supply the BSAC with fifty head of cattle each month through the agency of the much resented Native Police.

This practice must have been a source of great irritation and discontent to the Natives...many of those under whose charge the Company had placed cattle had possessed a certain number of their own, and still considered some of the cattle claimed by the Company but left in their charge as their own property, and the result of these cattle-collecting visits of the Native police must have kept them in a continual state of dread and uncertainty.⁴²⁰

In December 1895, the BSAC redistributed the cattle to the Ndebele, but the fear that they would soon be systematically deprived of their cattle continued to persist. Martin argued that 'the native mind' did not understand 'on what grounds the Company could place restrictions on his own personal property.'⁴²¹ Therefore, the mistake by the BSAC of claiming the cattle as the property of the deposed King after the war rendered the 'native mind' uncertain and suspicious towards the British, especially due to the 'frequent drafts (of cattle) made by the Native police.'⁴²² Furthermore, Martin asserted that it was not only in material terms that the seizure of cattle impelled the Ndebele to rebel, but also in cultural terms. In order for a young Ndebele man to 'purchase' a wife in accordance to Ndebele tradition, he needed to own cattle. By seizing and later redistributing cattle, the BSAC disrupted the 'native customs' and angered many young men who could then not take any wives.⁴²³

Approximately 40,000 cattle were returned to the Ndebele, before being decimated by rinderpest. According to the APS, this figure was extremely low and unfair, since they believed that the Ndebele were in possession of close to '200,000 or more' prior to 1893 and this was certainly not 'the cattle sufficient for their needs' as was required of the BSAC in the

⁴¹⁹ Palley, *The Constitutional History*, 123-124.

⁴²⁰ TNA: CO 879/47: Colonel Richard Martin, Report on Question B (cattle), enclosed in Rosmead to Chamberlain, 2 February 1897, 8.

⁴²¹ Ibid., 8.

⁴²² Ibid., 9.

⁴²³ TNA: CO 879/47: Rosmead to Chamberlain, 2 February 1897, 7.

1894 Order.⁴²⁴ It was therefore clear that seizing the cattle after the First Matabele War was not reasonably in accordance to the relevant estimations, and moreover, it collided with the spread of rinderpest, which then paved the way for further grievances and resentment.

Instead of being the result of a policy, Lt. General Goodenough, the Commander-in-Chief of the forces in South Africa, believed that the outbreak of the rebellion was due to bad luck and random circumstances and not to the administration and distribution of cattle after the war itself, because it unfortunately collided with the outbreak of rinderpest.⁴²⁵ However, as Ian Phimister has observed, the Company had probably already sold a significant number of the seized cattle on the Kimberley and Johannesburg markets shortly after claiming them as loot in 1893.⁴²⁶ The rinderpest may therefore also have been a convenient excuse for the Company in hiding the real number of cattle seized and redistributed. Certainly, the issue of cattle affected the socio-economic and cultural tensions between the BSAC and the Ndebele and remained a key incitement for the rebellion in 1896 and therefore also an issue for which the British government lamented company rule. The chaotic proceedings and the lack of clarity deriving from the rinderpest and the ownership of cattle only served to complicate the whole affair, but it remains clear that the BSAC saw a possibility to advance the economy of Southern Rhodesia by seizing the cattle relatively indiscriminately.

The Company Labour Scheme

The issue of cattle, however, remained minuscule compared to the matter of 'native labour' before and after the uprising, which touched upon the very moral foundations of the British Empire. As a part of the administrative regulations imposed after the war in 1893, the indunas had to supply a certain amount of labour to the BSAC to work in the mines and on farms. The issue of labour was a rather sensitive one because the British Empire was on a self-designated campaign to rid the world and particularly Africa of the sin of slavery vis-à-vis the civilising mission. The labour scheme imposed by the BSAC after the First Matabele War was therefore a critical issue, as it could be interpreted as a form of slavery, thus causing ruptures in the principles and moral legitimization of the British Empire.

After the 1894 Order was imposed, it determined rather stringent terms for labour and that 'labour could not even be accepted in lieu of hut tax.' A critical aspect of Martin's

⁴²⁴ TNA: CO 879/52: APS to CO, 28 July 1897, 58.

⁴²⁵ TNA: CO 879/52: Goodenough to Chamberlain, 26 June 1896.

⁴²⁶ Phimister, 'Meat and Monopolies', 396.

report, therefore, was whether or not the BSAC was in violation of both the labour regulations as decided in 1894 and broader imperial morality.⁴²⁷ Martin evaluated and subsequently criticised the BSAC, particularly on the issue of labour, which he claimed was a systematic compulsory labour scheme. He concluded that ‘compulsory labour did undoubtedly exist in Matabeleland’ and ‘labour was procured by the various Native Commissioners for the various requirements of the Government (BSAC administration in Salisbury), mining companies and private persons.’ Furthermore, ‘the Native Commissioners, in the first instance, endeavoured to obtain labour through the indunas, but, failing in this, they procured it by force.’⁴²⁸ Martin’s report, therefore, raised eyebrows, as it had now officially been uncovered that a systematic labour scheme at odds with British imperial morality and law existed.

Indeed, there can be little doubt that a labour scheme existed in Matabeleland, especially when one considers the mining industry and the expectations of discovering gold. In order to keep the mining industry afloat, a great deal of labour was needed: the answer to that problem was to pressure the indunas into supplying cheap labour. Moreover, the financial situation of the BSAC was somewhat gloomy, since neither Mashona nor Matabeleland had yet proved to be the lost kingdom of Ophir holding King Solomon’s legendary mines. Indeed, a report circulated by the BSAC to its stakeholders sought to conceal the disappointment of Southern Rhodesia’s mineral wealth and instead blamed ‘the ancients’ for having exhausted the mines, urging the stakeholders to be patient, as these deposits were deeper than initially expected.⁴²⁹ Furthermore, with the planning of large construction projects, especially railroads, a substantial supply of cheap African labour was deemed necessary for the future development of Southern Rhodesia, thus giving further reason for the Company to obtain labour forcibly.⁴³⁰

The evidence of a compulsory labour scheme presented in Martin’s report is very substantial; of the fifteen Native Commissioners from whom he had gathered reports, eight had directly admitted that compulsory labour existed in their areas of jurisdiction. Only two denied it, and each of the others ‘either avoids the question or argues it was not exactly compulsory labour.’⁴³¹ Of course, Martin, just like others of his time, also had severe reservations about the Ndebele as a race. Whilst his report was to explore the various causes

⁴²⁷ TNA: CO 879/53: Milner to Chamberlain, 18 January 1898, 84.

⁴²⁸ TNA: CO 879/47: Rosmead to Chamberlain, 2 February 1897, 2.

⁴²⁹ LSE: DT 751: The British South Africa Company, 1895, 73.

⁴³⁰ TNA: CO 879/53: Milner to Chamberlain, 18 January 1898, 147. See also, Jon Lunn, *Capital and Labour in the Rhodesian Railway System, 1888-1947* (London, 1997).

⁴³¹ TNA: CO 879/47: Martin to Rosmead, 9 June 1896, enclosed in Rosmead to Chamberlain, 2 February 1897, 4.

of the rebellion, he also suggested that the Ndebele themselves were ‘essentially a warlike people’ and that history should have taught the British the lesson that these peoples would eventually rise again: ‘The old Zulu daring, cruelty, and determination, still existed in the Matabele, though, perhaps in a somewhat modified degree up to advent of their white conquerors.’⁴³² This led him to two conclusions: on the one hand, Martin believed one of the causes of the rebellion was, as discussed above, they were not completely defeated after the first war, and as they were a violent race, the rebellion in 1896 was inevitable. On the other hand, the administration after the first war directly clashed with the Ndebele perception of life itself. Supposedly, they considered labour to be derogatory; they lived off plunder and war, and forcing them to work on farms and in mines was too much of a transition from their alleged ‘savage’ mentality.⁴³³ Therefore, Martin believed that it would be a good idea to somewhat forcibly teach the Ndebele the ‘advantages of labour.’⁴³⁴

Common prudence alone ought to have been enough to deter the Government from introducing a practice which, viewed in the most lenient light, can only be interpreted as a mild form of compulsory labour, and which, to the raw and hitherto independent Matabele, must have seemed nothing less than slavery itself.⁴³⁵

Accordingly, Martin suggested that the labour scheme was lenient, but due to the ‘native mind’ of the Ndebele, it was perceived much worse: as slavery. Therefore, while the labour scheme was a cause behind the rebellion, Martin still believed it necessary to develop the colony. Yet, at the same time, he advocated the supposed advantages of having imposed compulsory labour and based this on principles connected to racial stereotypes of the savage Ndebele needing to be exposed to Christian virtues and work ethics. Such suppositions therefore merged the more practical and economic aspect of British imperialism with the moral foundations. A ‘soft’ and voluntarily civilising mission would not always work and therefore the process of civilising could allegedly be sped up through force and coercion.

One central point of critique that remained, however, was the method by which the BSAC obtained this labour. This happened through the Native Police, who simply rode out to the kraals and forcibly took with them able men for the mines. Martin considered it ‘a most dangerous practice’ because the Native Police would abuse their powers and this would only reinforce the already prevalent hatred of the Native Police among the Ndebele. This practice therefore completely excluded any possibility of reconciliation with the different tribes and disrupted the balance of power within the Ndebele community itself. Native Police

⁴³² TNA: CO 879/47: Martin, Report on Question B (cattle) in Rosmead to Chamberlain, 2 February 1897, 5.

⁴³³ Ibid., 5-6.

⁴³⁴ Ibid., 6.

⁴³⁵ Ibid., 6.

officers were often people who had previously had little or no power, and they were now forcing individuals, traditionally higher up in the hierarchy, to do hard labour in the mines. Furthermore, Martin alerted that granting such powers to the Native Police was also dangerous because of their supposedly inferior racial traits: 'these Native Police were let loose amongst them, free to give vent to all their natural greed and passion, and this, I fear, they were not backward in doing.'⁴³⁶

Accordingly, Martin contended that tasking the Native Police with obtaining the labour was a crucial mistake since they themselves were African and due to their racial traits were not trustworthy. Moreover, Martin argued that the BSAC should have been better at selecting people for the Native Police and that they should have sent white policemen to the kraals to not seem too derogative towards the Ndebele.⁴³⁷ Martin's views certainly derived from racist preoccupations, but he was not alone in assuming that the racial traits of the Ndebele were a key factor behind the uprising: 'Native Commissioner Jackson says the natives in his district, Belingwe, were wild, more like bucks than human beings, and forcing them to work, had tended towards taming them.'⁴³⁸ This indicates two things: first, that a harsh labour scheme was undoubtedly in place, as Jackson refers to the allegedly positive effects that forced labour had already had, and second, that the general perception of the Ndebele was steeped in racial rhetoric.

To summarise Martin's report, it is contemplated that the cause of the rebellion was due to both the administration and mismanagement of the BSAC after the First Matabele War and due to the racial characteristics of the Ndebele in being incapable of developing and undertaking hard labour. Much adhering to Osterhammel's suggestion that conflict arose when the 'barbarian' did not willingly take the gifts of the 'civilised', the Ndebele remained hostile to colonial rule and the alleged improvement that came with it.

This leaves us with the question of what premises and purposes there were behind the compiling of Martin's report. According to historian Robert Blake, who bases most of his work on Ranger's research, Chamberlain had directly ordered Martin to disrupt the aforementioned peace settlement in the Matopos because he wanted to implement more 'punitive measures' against the defeated rebels. Furthermore, Martin's inquiry into the administration of Matabeleland was supposedly more due to Chamberlain's personal hatred

⁴³⁶ Ibid., 6-7.

⁴³⁷ Ibid., 6-7.

⁴³⁸ TNA: CO 879/53: Milner to Chamberlain, 18 January 1898, 82.

of Rhodes than to actual official business.⁴³⁹ This seems unlikely to have been the case, as it was unsurprising that the government was interested in inquiring into the causes of the rebellion which they had allocated troops to quell. Furthermore, given the unpopularity of the BSAC, such inquiry was perhaps not out of personal hatred of Rhodes and the Company, but rather as part of a wider strategy concerning imperial policy in Southern Africa.

Instead, the decision to have Martin compile a report on the administration of the BSAC resulted from the government seizing an opportunity to rectify the position that was established in the 1894 Order. With the outbreak of the rebellion, they now had a reliable and officially recognised man-on-the-spot to act as eyes and ears, who provided conclusive evidence which could prompt further governmental intervention into the administration of Southern Rhodesia. However, with the outbreak of the war and the disclosure of company maladministration, another question that arose was why the CO had not intervened and brought the Company to stand by the obligations agreed to in 1894. But here, the reason was simply that by not having an official on the spot, they were unable to do so and that they were unaware of such violations.⁴⁴⁰ Thus, the official mind chose to turn a blind eye for as long as it could; yet when the rebellion broke out and had the potential to spread allegations of misconduct and further upheaval, they intervened and made sure the BSAC was depicted as the culprit, which conveniently came at a time where the sentiment towards the Company and its main figures were critical due to the ongoing Jameson Raid scandal.

In broader public opinion, the issue of how the BSAC had procured labour for its mines received growing attention and critique. Because of the parliamentary inquiry into the affairs of Rhodes and the BSAC, the administration of Southern Rhodesia had also come under scrutiny. Indeed, several notable newspapers published outlines of Martin's report on the maladministration of the BSAC.⁴⁴¹ This prompted the new administrator in Southern Rhodesia, Albert Grey, to respond to such critique, where it was suggested that Martin's claim of a compulsory labour scheme suggested that labour was procured by physical force. Instead, Grey cited a Native Commissioner who claimed that he had experienced the Ndebele to be happy to work for the Company because they received wages, which they did not under Lobengula.⁴⁴² However, the accusations of maladministration were far-reaching in Britain and were published in more local newspapers, such as *The North-Eastern Daily Gazette* and elsewhere, long before Martin's report had been compiled and reported on.⁴⁴³

⁴³⁹ Robert Blake, *A history of Rhodesia* (London, 1977), 136-38.

⁴⁴⁰ Palley, *The Constitutional History*, 127.

⁴⁴¹ *The Standard*, *The Pall Mall Gazette* and *The Morning Post*, all on 24 July 1897.

⁴⁴² *The Pall Mall Gazette*, 24 July 1897

⁴⁴³ *The North-Eastern Gazette*, 27 June 1896

At the forefront of such critique were humanitarian groups such as the APS, who lamented the labour scheme, as it distanced the Ndebele from influence which could furnish grievances and may thus have been a cause for the rebellion. But the main issue for the APS was, of course, that to them, the labour conditions were reminiscent of slavery:

Our Committee is aware that forms of slavery in Matabeleland before it was taken possession of by the Chartered Company, and that the proposed system has counterparts in portions of the South African Republic, and of the Portuguese territories in Africa. But it cannot suppose that Her Majesty's Government will allow any system of forced labour, even with such supposed safeguards as Earl Grey and others of humane disposition may suggest, to be revived, or to remain in force, under whatever scheme of administration may be resolved upon for this part of Her Majesty's dominions.⁴⁴⁴

The use of the word 'slavery' is key, as it echoed the moral foundations of the civilising mission and encompassed a powerful argument due to its popularity among officials and the public. Furthermore, it was a powerful accusation in a legal sense too, as the Berlin Treaty had, as shown, established anti-slavery to be at the top of the moral and legal pedestal of imperial expansion, and it would thus morally and judicially de-legitimise company rule in Southern Rhodesia.

In 1897, Henry Fox Bourne, Secretary of the APS, published a report in which he described the maladministration of the BSAC and its immoral treatment of the Ndebele. It was claimed, that in February 1896 – a month before the rebellion – the Company had introduced new measures of forcibly procuring labour where 9,000 Ndebele 'boys' were hired.⁴⁴⁵ The BSAC did not simply sit by whilst the critique of their administration and conduct escalated and weakened their position and reputation. One attempt to prove that their labour scheme was not similar to slavery nor obtained through force was presented in a telegram by W.H. Milton, the acting Administrator in Salisbury. In this telegram, Milton enclosed a series of reports from prominent religious figures in Southern Rhodesia. The first report, by Father Daignault, Priest in charge of the Roman Catholic Mission in Southern Rhodesia, was very favourable in its tone towards the BSAC. Not only were the accusations of a forced labour scheme rejected, but also the report suggested that labour, in general, was healthy for the African race:

In my opinion the natives of this country must be considered, and in reality are, but grown up children. Unfortunately, they do not possess the innocence of children, but are on the contrary given too many vices, conspicuous among them being their strong inclination to idleness.⁴⁴⁶

⁴⁴⁴ TNA: CO 879/47: APS to CO, 2 December 1896, 1-2.

⁴⁴⁵ Henry Fox Bourne, *Matabeleland and the Chartered Company* (London, 1897), 29.

⁴⁴⁶ TNA: CO 879/53: Statement by Father Daignault in Milner to Chamberlain 29 December 1897, 1.

Thus, Daignault blamed all the misfortunes of the Ndebele on the men being lazy and child-like. Since they did not care about working, they could not improve their land. They had no Christian work ethic and therefore they starved and gradually perished before eventually becoming extinct altogether.

White men are obliged to work in order to meet the exigencies of laws and regulations concerning lands, dwellings, sanitary arrangements etc.; they are obliged to work to pay the taxes and rates imposed for the general good of the State. I believe these laws and regulations to be even more necessary for the natives, and, if enforced, the natives would be obliged to work. This, in my opinion, is the kind of forced labour required in this country, and which would be beneficial to the whole community.⁴⁴⁷

The distinction between the races was here based upon the issue of labour. Since race, as in this case, was based upon the racial trait of having a healthy work ethic, the whole issue of race therefore relied upon Christian morals. Of course, this is only strengthened by the fact that the above statements were made by a man of the church. Nonetheless, it may be suggested that the Roman Catholic Mission was in fact patronised and supported by the BSAC and perhaps even by Rhodes himself. Such a claim becomes even more believable considering that the Roman Catholic Mission was granted 6,000 acres of land and two farms by the BSAC after the rebellion.⁴⁴⁸

During the parliamentary inquiry into the Jameson Raid, the issue of colonial labour also became a focal point of public and official attention. On one occasion, Chamberlain, as part of the committee, interviewed two Boer witnesses who had worked for the mine owners in Southern Rhodesia. The witnesses stated that company rule was benign and was more popular and efficient than imperial rule in Southern Rhodesia would ever be. In regard to the treatment of the Ndebele, Chamberlain eventually pressured them on the question of labour, and, based on their answers, concluded that conditions were that workers could neither chose their own employers, bargain their wages nor chose their own working times, and 'thus, they (workers) were forced labour for masters who were imposed upon them, for wages which were settled for them, and at a time which was fixed for them. What is the difference between that and slavery?'⁴⁴⁹ This directly reflected the views of the APS who had appealed to the CO that in addition to the conditions of labour, the procurement hereof was also lamentable and urged the government to seek to assume full control of Southern Rhodesia in order to prevent further mistreatment of the Ndebele at the hands of the BSAC.⁴⁵⁰

⁴⁴⁷ Ibid., 2-3.

⁴⁴⁸ TNA: CO 879/53: Milner to Chamberlain, 31 December 1897.

⁴⁴⁹ Excerpt from inquiry in *The Standard*, 10 March 1897.

⁴⁵⁰ TNA: CO 879/52: APS to CO, 28 July 1897, 1-2.

This was welcomed by Chamberlain, who was now of the belief that imperial control was superior to company rule. However, directly annexing Southern Rhodesia would be a controversial move for both political and financial reasons. But the humanitarian critique by the APS and others was here an ally of the British government, as it supported them to impose further control over Southern Rhodesia and the BSAC. Indicatively, in a debate in April 1897, where several MPs were present, the issue of imperialism and the responsibility of the coloniser towards the colonised was discussed, and one of the major points was indeed Matabeleland. Former Chief Secretary of State for Ireland John Morley was particularly critical towards the labour scheme, which he saw as being little different from slavery. However, more importantly, he stressed that if the state of forced labour continued to persist in Matabeleland, ‘the Imperial Government and the CO would be responsible, and it would be for public opinion in this country to decide whether it would permit under the name of “labour regulations” a return to an old system of Slavery which our forefathers did so much to put down.’⁴⁵¹ This statement illustrates both the public and political pressure upon how the CO should enter the negotiations with the BSAC regarding future ‘native administration.’ It was the government that was responsible for securing the rights and the welfare of the Ndebele, and only by imposing new and more humanitarian regulations could they prevent it. On the one hand, this came to pose pressure on Whitehall, but on the other, it also presented them with the perfect tool to revise the 1894 Order and restrain Rhodes and the BSAC.

The Aftermath: Labour Regulations and Imperial Policies

The issue of labour not only persisted during the enquiries into the causes of the rebellion, but was also a central issue concerning the intended future of Southern Rhodesia. The BSAC wanted to implement a new labour scheme to sustain the mining industry, but the government was suspicious and unaccommodating when it came to Southern Rhodesia and labour. While the previous chapter has disclosed the importance of the labour issue in Southern Rhodesia in public and political opinion, it is therefore worth exploring the views of the official mind on this matter as the post-rebellion negotiations unfolded.

The post-war Native Regulations, as they were called, were negotiated between the CO, led by Chamberlain, and the BSAC itself. The CO predominantly relied on reports from

⁴⁵¹ Excerpt from ‘Native Races and the treatment’ in *The Daily News*, 5 April 1897.

Southern Rhodesia, particularly those already discussed by Martin. According to Keppel-Jones, the government did not have the right to alter the original charter until 1914, but since the BSAC feared its complete revocation, they accepted fundamental changes in their powers and privileges after 1896.⁴⁵² Furthermore, the ill-will towards the BSAC originating from claims of maladministration and the Jameson Raid undermined any complaints from Rhodes and his compatriots. Consequently, the Southern Rhodesia Order in Council of 1898 [henceforth the 1898 Order] which came into effect was ostensibly a modification of the original charter and the 1894 Order and brought about fundamental changes to the rights of the Company pertaining to the administration of Southern Rhodesia.

Most crucially was the future place of the Ndebele and the labour provisions that was to be implemented. Before the war, there had been a provision for 'public works' which had ostensibly allowed the Company to obtain labour for constructions projects such as roads and wells, but in reality it was for mines and farms. The rationale of public works as a concept was that it could purposefully justify forced labour, as the alleged development of the colony would bring civilisation and trade to the Africans and thus serve as a means to a brighter end.⁴⁵³ Perhaps due to the anti-slavery articles of the Berlin Treaty, the implementation of rhetoric and terms deliberately seeking to exonerate coercion was created and one of these was the use of 'public works' as a legalistic attempt to provide a source of labour. The official status of 'public works', however, did not fool humanitarians nor the Africans themselves, and the invocation of the word 'Chibaro' – literally meaning 'slave' – was widespread among the Africans in Southern Rhodesia.⁴⁵⁴ Therefore, public works was a potential opportunity for the BSAC to acquire labour in the same vein as prior to the rebellion.

The issue of not only how to control the indigenous peoples, but also how to utilise them, was perhaps the most central point of discussion after the rebellion. Martin had suggested that the labour scheme was, in fact, necessary and healthy, albeit a cause for the rebellion. Thus, it was not just an economic necessity: it was also good for the alleged savages. Rosmead agreed to such view, stressing that a future labour scheme would also have the intention to 'teach Natives advantages which will result to themselves from industrial habits.'⁴⁵⁵ Similarly, Milner stated that if labour was not drawn from the Africans, 'the development of the country will be retarded and the natives themselves will be to a great

⁴⁵² Keppel-Jones, *Rhodes and Rhodesia*, 547

⁴⁵³ Cooper, Holt and Scott (eds.), Introduction, *Beyond Slavery*, 30.

⁴⁵⁴ Cooper, 'Conditions analogous to Slavery', 130-31.

⁴⁵⁵ TNA; CO 879/47: Rosmead to Chamberlain, 10 December 1896.

extent idle, and consequently restless and dangerous.⁴⁵⁶ Therefore, it was perceived that it was not only absolutely necessary for the economic future of Southern Rhodesia to impose a labour scheme and allow public works, but it was supposedly also good for the Ndebele, as it was deemed healthy for their racial development so that they might rid themselves of the inherent idleness of their race.

For humanitarian groups, the issue of forced labour was a serious one and in 1897 the APS had publicly stated that 'forced labour is a form of slavery which the Chartered Company had no right to establish in Matabeleland' regardless of the awareness and sanctioning of such measures by the British government's representatives.⁴⁵⁷ It would be reasonable to surmise that the British government were to an extent aware of the measures taken in Southern Rhodesia to procure labour, and in particular, representatives in Southern Africa would likely have been aware hereof. The problem for these officials was, as Milner himself stated clearly, that in order to procure labour, the Ndebele had to forcibly be compelled to work, and this, he believed, could lead to 'mistaken accusations of slavery'.⁴⁵⁸ Moreover, Milner called for the BSAC and the government to reconcile with the Ndebele and Shona and make sure that what he called 'the native problem' was at the top of their respective agendas, thus highlighting how central the issue of labour and the administration of the Africans themselves actually was.⁴⁵⁹

Milner was in many ways the personification of the values associated with empire. His book *England in Egypt* (1892), for instance, echoed the views of John Seeley's *The Expansion of England* (1883) and Rudyard Kipling's poem *The White Man's Burden* (1899).⁴⁶⁰ Clearly, Milner's views on race and empire were evident in the arguments he expressed regarding labour and the powers of the BSAC during the post-rebellion negotiations. Here Milner was key, since he mediated between Southern Rhodesia and London, and whilst he was in fact in the service of the government and thus a representative of the official mind, his job meant that he was focussed on the success of his designated region and in that respect was entangled into the affairs of the BSAC. Although Martin's report clearly concluded that a harsh labour system had been in place prior to the rebellion, Milner believed that these claims did not represent the truth:

⁴⁵⁶ TNA: CO 879/52: Milner to Chamberlain, 28 July 1897, 1.

⁴⁵⁷ Fox Bourne, *Matabeleland and the Chartered Company*, 32.

⁴⁵⁸ TNA: CO 879/52: Milner to Chamberlain, 28 July 1897, 2.

⁴⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 3-4.

⁴⁶⁰ Wesseling, *Divide and Rule*, 311.

The Company's present agents in framing these Regulations have sought to provide against harsh and arbitrary treatment of the natives, and to lay the foundations of a system which will tend to promote industry and contentment among them.⁴⁶¹

It can be surmised that Milner's views were somewhat adhering to the racist discourse of his time. Indeed, Milner argued that 'they [Ndebele] have never been used to work, except for the purpose of obtaining the bare necessities of life, otherwise than under compulsion.' Milner therefore implied not just that a compulsory labour scheme was a good idea to implement after the rebellion, but also the whole argument was based on his experience of compulsory labour being efficient, thus proving that although he had just denied the existence of such a scheme, it was without a doubt in place before the rebellion.⁴⁶²

There can be no doubt that a racialised view of the civilising mission was the premise of Milner's views regarding labour: 'They [Ndebele] require to be educated to the idea of habit and regular work... and it seems to me the duty of their white rulers, for the good of the natives themselves, as well as in the interest of the development of the country.'⁴⁶³ Surely, the civilising mission could not merely have been hypocrisy made in order to justify the expansion into Africa, since it was here used *internally* by officials in discussing the future of Southern Rhodesia. In fact, this indicates that the official mind was deeply influenced by, and relied upon, the premises of humanitarian ideology and racist prejudices.

Thus, the principles of the civilising mission were at the core of the negotiations on the future of Southern Rhodesia, particularly when concerning the regulations intended to solve the 'native problem': it was contended that 'without earning some money outside, the inhabitants of the reserves will have no means of improving their condition or raising themselves to the scale of civilisation. They will remain in their old savage state.'⁴⁶⁴ The arguments for maintaining a labour scheme were a combination of forcibly civilising the Ndebele from their savage state and also accommodating practical issues of earning a wage and thus sustaining a livelihood. However, it remained impossible for the officials to allow such provisions, as the rhetoric of anti-slavery was an intrinsic doctrine within the ranks of the CO and among the wider public to whom they were responsible. Indeed, Milner lamented the difficulty of the situation by stating that 'there is no system which could be proposed involving any degree of compulsion upon the natives to work, which is less likely than this to excite opposition on the part of reasonable advocates of native rights.' Of course, Milner here refers to the APS and other humanitarian movements. However, the conflict expected

⁴⁶¹ TNA: CO 879/52: Milner to Chamberlain, 13 October 1897, 1.

⁴⁶² Ibid., 1.

⁴⁶³ Ibid., 2.

⁴⁶⁴ TNA: CO 879/52: Milner to Chamberlain, 13 October 1897, 3-4.

by Milner was not concerning whether or not the British Empire should seek the material and spiritual advancement of its colonial subjects, but rather *how* it should do so.

Indeed, while Milner's view of the Ndebele was certainly derogatory, it was nonetheless a different vision of how to implement a civilising process to uplift the Ndebele from savagery. For him, it meant a more adamant and rigidly defined administrative framework pertaining to 'native affairs'. Communication and efficiency were key to ensure its success and this meant more frequent use of 'native messengers' and the hiring of more Native Commissioners to ensure a quick response on various issues and to solve potential conflicts and grievances immediately to prevent any escalation. Furthermore, the Administrator, Milner suggested, was to have more power, but these powers were limited regarding 'Native Affairs', as a Native Affairs Department would be established in Southern Rhodesia as part of the wider restructuring of the administration.⁴⁶⁵ Milner also stressed the importance of ensuring that the new reserves were comprised of land suitable for the Ndebele to sustain a livelihood as well as seeking to include them in the Southern Rhodesia's future, rather than excluding them and hiding them away in reservations with few or no resources. In other words, he suggested that the BSAC lived up to the aforementioned 1894 Order, clause 49 where they were to provide sufficient land, cattle and resources.⁴⁶⁶

The post-rebellion negotiations were, of course, connected to the then fragile mining industry in Southern Rhodesia. Connected to this was a struggle between the commercial incentives of imperialism against the moral principles. This was especially relevant considering that the BSAC's mineral rights over Southern Rhodesia, which had been laid out in the 1894 Order, were still applicable immediately after the rebellion:

If the Company should require any such land for the purpose of mineral development or as sites of townships, or for railways or other public works, the Land Commission may order the natives to remove from such land or any portion thereof, and shall assign to them just and liberal compensation in land elsewhere.⁴⁶⁷

However, these rights were soon revised, as the CO did not allow the BSAC to implement a labour scheme which was so vital for the future success for the mines. The 'native question' was of great importance to the CO and especially to Chamberlain himself. Indeed, every request by the BSAC to introduce anything that resembled a provision for a labour scheme

⁴⁶⁵ TNA: CO 879/52: Milner to Chamberlain, 11 May 1898, 1-2.

⁴⁶⁶ TNA: CO 879/52: Milner to Chamberlain, 11 May 1898, 3-4 and TNA: DO 119/521: Matabeleland Order in Council, 18 July 1894, Article 49.

⁴⁶⁷ TNA: DO 119/521: Matabeleland Order in Council, 18 July 1894, Article 51.

was adamantly rejected by Chamberlain.⁴⁶⁸ The official minds' stance on the Native Regulations issue was stern and any clause giving the BSAC the right to obtain 'native labour' was omitted from the charter concerning Native Regulations.⁴⁶⁹

Mr Chamberlain is not prepared to accept any provision for compulsory labour, and the words introduced by the Administrator in Part I. Clause 4, authorising the Administrator in Council to call upon Chiefs and Headmen to Supply men for public work at fair wages have accordingly been omitted.⁴⁷⁰

First of all, the omission of public works is important here, as it was deliberately removed as a way for the BSAC to obtain labour. The CO was therefore well aware that such a term could easily be abused and the Africans were drawn to work forcibly in mines and on farms. Secondly, the Part I, Clause 4 which was referred to, was part of the initial Native Regulations proclamation draft sent from the BSAC, to Milner to the CO. Milner, in mediating this draft from the BSAC represented the official mind in the region as being influenced by the BSAC by advocating compulsory labour to be virtuous and beneficial for Britain and the Ndebele alike.⁴⁷¹ Yet, the Native Regulations proclamation was passed and proclaimed on 25 November 1898 as part of the wider 1898 Order, without containing a clause in which the BSAC could legally obtain compulsory labour from the Ndebele.⁴⁷²

There was, without a doubt, a clear distinction between the official mind and the BSAC's intentions with Matabeleland and its indigenous population, with the official mind seeking a safer administration to hinder further rebellions and potential political discrediting and the BSAC seeking to change their financial fortunes in Southern Rhodesia by using cheap labour. This was the reason why, in a telegram to Milner, Chamberlain expressed his concern that reports about the Native Regulation Proclamation had been violated by the BSAC.

The indunas, whilst they were clearly informed by him that the Government would not allow forced labour, were at the same time led to understand that they were expected to supply the necessary number of labourers, and that, as Government officials' stipends, they were to carry out the wishes of the Government.⁴⁷³

When considering the Southern Rhodesian mining industry's situation, it becomes quite clear that the BSAC did indeed continue its harsh labour scheme after 1896. As shown by Charles van Onselen, the labour scheme continued to persist after the rebellion. Indeed, van Onselen reveals that the BSAC obtained Ndebele labour illegally. In 1895, just before the rebellion,

⁴⁶⁸ TNA: CO 879/53: CO to BSAC, 8 August 1898.

⁴⁶⁹ TNA: DO 119/ 576: Chamberlain to Milner, 6 August 1898.

⁴⁷⁰ TNA: CO 879/53: CO to the BSAC, 8 August 1898.

⁴⁷¹ TNA: CO 879/53: Milner to Chamberlain, 11 May 1898.

⁴⁷² TNA: CO 879/53: Acting Hihh Commissioner Cox to Chamberlain, 29 November 1898.

⁴⁷³ TNA: DO 119/576: Chamberlain to Milner, 23 December 1899.

the Southern Rhodesian mining industry was producing an acceptable output, but by 1898 'it had slumped to a state of depression.'⁴⁷⁴ Because the rebellion halted the supply of labour to the mines, a steady supply therefore seemed to have been indispensable to the success of mining industry. Ultimately it resulted in the BSAC's stock market crash in London in 1903, which came despite a steady rise in the income from gold and mineral production in Southern Rhodesia.⁴⁷⁵ The outbreak of the South African War in 1899 was the final piece in the jigsaw that saw the mining industry collapse due to the disruption of railways. It has been stipulated that the rebellion and the subsequent collapse of the mining industry, was the end of Southern Rhodesia as a frontier colony where the arrival of prospectors and the mystification of the region stopped because it had become clear that the mineral wealth was wildly overestimated. Perhaps reinforced by romantic novels such as *King Solomon's Mines*, this old pioneering or gold-rush imperialism was eventually overtaken by agricultural development, which sought to lure new settlers to Southern Rhodesia with the promise of land instead of gold.⁴⁷⁶

This turn towards an agrarian economy had significant ramifications for the Ndebele and Shona, as it meant the gradual takeover of their ancestral land by the increasing number of settlers and their extended demand for land for cattle herding and farming. Through various reforms and measures, the BSAC managed to increase the influx of settlers to Southern Rhodesia and curbed African cultivation and livelihoods in the process. In 1905-6, for instance, the newly established Land Department restricted the number of African tenants on land owned by European settlers, as these 'Kaffir farmers' were disrupting the cultivation and progress of the colony by taking up space which could purposefully be settled by white farmers.⁴⁷⁷ Post-rebellion Southern Rhodesia, therefore, while on paper seeking to eradicate forced labour, instead saw the increasing expropriation of African lands as the settler population grew. Presumably, Whitehall saw little trouble in these developments, as they only meant that Southern Rhodesia was moving towards a white dominion and could possibly naturally develop into the domain of British South Africa rather than company rule.

Regarding the mining industry, van Onselen's research has shown that between October 1900 and March 1901, of the 8,429 workers 'engaged' by the BSAC's Labour Board in Southern Rhodesia, 2,160 deserted, which suggests that the mining industry continued

⁴⁷⁴ Onselen, *Chibaro*, 75.

⁴⁷⁵ Christopher Cooksey, 'Early Gold Mining in Southern Rhodesia – The Mining Regulations and Revenue Documents of the British South Africa Company, 1890-1922', *The Rhodesia Study Circle Handbook*, Memoir 9 (2011).

⁴⁷⁶ Dane Kennedy, *Island of White: Settler Society and Culture in Kenya and Southern Rhodesia, 1890-1939* (Durham, 1987), 34-35.

⁴⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 35-36.

with the use of forced labour and held its labourers in lamentable conditions.⁴⁷⁸ This did not pass unnoticed by Chamberlain and the CO, who in 1899 made direct contact with the BSAC to remind them that they were not allowed to obtain labour through such methods. In fact, the BSAC was reminded that the right to obtain compulsory labour was omitted on purpose.⁴⁷⁹ While the official mind sought to rid Southern Rhodesia of a compulsory labour scheme, they had simultaneously also wanted the BSAC to continue to hire labour from within Southern Rhodesia to keep the indigenous communities from 'idleness'. The Ndebele workers had complained about the conditions, salaries and the food they had received whilst working in the mines, and hence, the government was alerted by the potential ramifications of the situation. Of course, the BSAC was not prohibited from hiring any Ndebele to work in the mines; they were simply not allowed to obtain such labour through coercion.⁴⁸⁰

Imperial Policies and the Restraining of the BSAC

The issue of labour was perhaps the most evident and pressing concern when it came to deciding the future administration of the BSAC. But it far transcended the locality of Southern Rhodesia and was in fact part of a broader framework of British imperial policies and intentions. Therefore, from 1896 to 1898, the government abandoned its former stance of allowing the BSAC licence to do almost whatever it saw fit and instead intervened in its territories to establish appropriate governmental forms of control which would secure the objectives of a wider imperial policy.⁴⁸¹

The intention was to completely restructure the administration regarding the indigenous peoples, since Martin's report had showcased the incapability of the BSAC to effectively govern Southern Rhodesia and also furnished further suspicion towards company rule in general. Still, much power remained with the BSAC. For instance, the newly established Native Department, headed by a Secretary for Native Affairs, had the power to make decisions on disputes of chieftainship or succession where he saw fit.⁴⁸² Yet, the immediate attention was not aimed at the indigenous people as such, but rather at the distribution of power within the administration itself. As Milner had suggested, more Native Commissioners were appointed to various districts so that the different tribes and clans could

⁴⁷⁸ Onselen, *Chibaro*, 78.

⁴⁷⁹ TNA: DO 119/576: Chamberlain to BSAC, 23 December 1899.

⁴⁸⁰ TNA: DO 119/576: Chamberlain to Milner, 23 December 1899, 5.

⁴⁸¹ Palley, *The Constitutional History*, 128.

⁴⁸² TNA: CO 879/52: Native Regulations, enclosure no. 2 in BSAC to CO, 16 June 1897, 21.

easily communicate with the new administration.⁴⁸³ Implicit in this was, of course, the subtle intention that it was also easier to keep an eye on the various tribes and to be able to respond to a potential future rebellion more quickly in order to prevent it from spreading to a new full-scale rebellion. In many ways, the chiefs became vassals of the British Empire and the BSAC, as they would carry out duties and report on various issues such as crime and disease, help suppress future rebellions and supply labour to public works.⁴⁸⁴

Although Chamberlain reiterated frequently that the government had no interest in hampering the BSAC's business and internal administration of their territories, 'they [the CO] are necessarily deeply interested in the success of the native policy of the Company' because they assumed that it 'may have far-reaching results in South Africa and may thus involve Her Majesty's Government in grave responsibilities.'⁴⁸⁵ This should be seen in the context of the Jameson Raid where the BSAC had indeed involved the government in a grave international scandal. However, it also indicated that colonial rule by one actor could have potential spill-over effects. Indeed, there were prevalent fears that the Ndebele rebellion would spread into the Bechuanaland territory or affect the precarious relations with the Boer Republics.⁴⁸⁶ Therefore, ill-treatment of indigenous groups by the BSAC – or, for that matter, other colonial actors – was a matter of concern for the British government, as it posed potential geopolitical complications on a regional and international scale.

According to Robert Blake, the 1898 Order was the work of Chamberlain and Milner. However, what can clearly be inferred from the above is that it was not so much the work of Milner as Chamberlain due to the restrictions on obtaining labour. Furthermore, it suggests a contradiction in Blake's argument, since he on the one hand accuses the government of being racist and punishing the Ndebele and Shona, whilst on the other hand he argues that they were behind the 1898 Order which ostensibly sought to prevent the same ill-treatment.⁴⁸⁷

Instead, what is evident in examining the negotiations over the 1898 Order, in general, is that the issue of 'Native Administration' was a top priority for the government. Therefore, it introduced a new administrative structure and established the Native Affairs Department, which largely stayed the same until 1965, albeit having its name changed to the Department of Internal Affairs. The decision to establish this department was ambiguous.

⁴⁸³ Ibid., 21-22.

⁴⁸⁴ Ibid., 22-23.

⁴⁸⁵ TNA: CO 879/47: Chamberlain to Rosmead, 10 December 1896.

⁴⁸⁶ TNA: CO 879/47: Chamberlain to Robinson, 14 April 1896.

⁴⁸⁷ Blake, *A history of Rhodesia*, 148.

First of all, a strong stance towards the BSAC in light of alleged ill-treatment could also distance the Boer Republics because of their harsh labour policies. Secondly, it was widely believed that, due to the inaccessibility of many outer regions of Southern Rhodesia, it was practical to appoint a local, European official. This last issue was based on the presumption that the Ndebele and Shona were used to having a chieftain (or rather, king), and would therefore have little trouble integrating into their new, subjugated role under the British flag. Furthermore, it also provides evidence of further control and decision-making from the government concerning Southern Rhodesia, since the appointment of these European officials in the outer regions was to be made by the Secretary of State of the Colonies, i.e. Chamberlain. Yet their loyalty could be doubted, as they were to be paid for by the BSAC, probably because the CO was reluctant to allocate further funds which could burden the British taxpayer.⁴⁸⁸ Nevertheless, on the whole, it remains clear that in the aftermath of the rebellion, the government sought to reinforce its position in Southern Rhodesia and monitor the affairs of the BSAC.⁴⁸⁹

To curb company rule, the legislative future of Southern Rhodesia's governance and its place within the British Empire thus came under scrutiny. Among British officials both in London and South Africa, there was a general interest in containing Rhodes and Southern Rhodesia. For instance, in 1897, Milner wrote to Selborne, the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies, that 'Rhodes looks to make the territory into a separate colony ultimately self-governed.' While this would mean that the BSAC kept mineral and other valuable rights, but gave up administration, Milner believed that it would see Rhodes as a *de facto* monarch. Yet, Milner condoned this scheme, as it could combine pressure upon the Boer republics 'to drive them into a S. African federation.' The problem, however, remained Rhodes. Milner considered him 'the only man big enough to carry out such work', but due to the Jameson Raid he remained an ill-favoured figure. Nevertheless, Milner contended that even if this was to work, Rhodes would himself also be a problem, as he 'is too strong a man to be merely used. He will work for his own ends in his own ways – we must accept that – but, on the other hand we must, to a great extent, guide and restrain him.'⁴⁹⁰ Selborne's reply was simple: 'You cannot write too many such letters as this one... They help us immensely and so far we have all [in the CO] agreed with every word of them.'⁴⁹¹ Hence, there were clear inclinations

⁴⁸⁸ Palley, *The Constitutional History*, 140-41.

⁴⁸⁹ Palmer, *Land and Racial Domination*, 53.

⁴⁹⁰ Milner to Selborne, 2 June 1897 in Cecil Headlam (ed.), *Milner Papers, South Africa* (London, 1931), 105-6.

⁴⁹¹ Selborne to Milner, 19 June 1897 in Headlam (ed.), *Milner Papers*, 109.

to impose further governmental control and to have a man-on-the-spot in Southern Rhodesia to efficiently represent the British government and act as its eyes and ears, especially since Rhodes would detest it.⁴⁹² For central official actors such as Chamberlain, Milner and Selborne, therefore, the post-rebellion negotiations, in which Rhodes was still suffering from the Jameson Raid, presented a viable opportunity to impose further control and finally get rid of the pre-1896 regulations which had obscured governmental control and influence of Southern Rhodesia.⁴⁹³

When visiting Southern Rhodesia, Milner reported back to Chamberlain that he was pleased with the economic prospects of the territory and that while the Company had wasted much money, they had also spent a lot on 'developing the estate.'⁴⁹⁴ However, the integration of Southern Rhodesia into the British Empire was to him a clear matter:

In respect of legislation, particularly native legislation, as well as in respect of appointments, the Company's Agents, for their own sake, ought to welcome effective Imperial control. The question is, how to exercise this control in a manner which (1) shall be based on full information and therefore really useful; (2) shall not cause intolerable friction with the Company; and (3) shall satisfy public opinion at home.⁴⁹⁵

Not only does this reveal the interests of British officials in taming the BSAC and rendering it a loyal and controllable sub-imperial actor, it also showcases that public opinion remained a factor in the calculation of interests and actions on the imperial stage. The scandals of the Jameson Raid and maladministration that had been revealed after 1896 were therefore ways in which to both mitigate public support and to wield it in order to achieve imperialistic interests. This should be understood in the wider geopolitical context of the time where the three aforementioned actors – Chamberlain, Milner and Selborne – were all central figures who have often come to personify the gradual movement up towards the South African War, which has indeed been referred to as 'Milner's War'.⁴⁹⁶ Of course, as Ronald Hyam has pointed out, this term falls short of including other crucial actors such as the above and Paul Kruger, not to mention the problematique of reducing the outbreak of the war to the result of personal ambition.⁴⁹⁷ Nevertheless, all three had colonialism high on their political agenda and sought to secure South Africa for the British Empire. In terms of their respective political

⁴⁹² Milner to Selborne, 15 June 1897 and Chamberlain's reply on 16 November 1897 in Headlam (ed.), *Milner Papers*, 109-10.

⁴⁹³ Milner to Chamberlain, 5 October 1897 in Headlam (ed.), *Milner Papers*, 118.

⁴⁹⁴ Milner to Chamberlain, 1 December 1897 in Headlam (ed.), *Milner Papers*, 140.

⁴⁹⁵ Ibid., 142.

⁴⁹⁶ Donal Lowry, *The South African War Reappraised*, (Manchester, 2000), 35. For a good piece on the influence of Milner, or 'Milnerism', see Eric Stokes, 'Milnerism', *The Historical Journal*, 5, 1 (1962).

⁴⁹⁷ Ronald Hyam, 'Review of British Supremacy in South Africa, by G.H.L. Le May', *The Historical Journal*, 9, 1 (1966), 150.

and ideological convictions, however, Selborne and Milner can be said to have been more pragmatic than the ideological Chamberlain, as exemplified by the fact that they were both in favour of a labour scheme for the mining industry in Southern Rhodesia despite the humanitarian critique.⁴⁹⁸

Selborne, however, can also be ascribed to be an advocate of broader imperial achievements. The renowned 'Selborne Memorandum', which outlined the plans and ambitions for South Africa before the outbreak of the war in 1899, is symptomatic hereof. On the British colonial 'project' in South Africa, he asked:

...are the British possessions in South Africa more likely to become separated from the British Empire, (i) if they become confederated with the two Republics under British flag as a British African Domain, or (ii) if they remain now as separate unities under various forms of Government and continue to have as their neighbours two independent Republics?⁴⁹⁹

The matter was simple: was South Africa to become a new Canada – loyal and part of the Empire? Or was it to become a new United States – rebellious and a geopolitical and economic rival? The problem remained that the Transvaal was 'the richest spot on earth' and so the balance would eventually mean that it would surpass the British territories, as it would be the centre of commerce, industry and social and political life. Furthermore, there was the external pressure of Germany and France in GSWA and Madagascar respectively. If a 'United States of South Africa' were to become a reality, he argued, Germany would become a force in Africa, seizing the enclave of Walvis Bay and connecting colonies in the east and west.⁵⁰⁰ For Selborne, there was no doubt: increased imperial control and force, with the purpose of subjugating the Boer republics.

The future of Southern Rhodesia was entangled into this broad geopolitical image. If it remained as a company-dominated colony where its future loyalty was doubtful at best, further control could secure the northern frontier and put further pressure on the Boer republics. This resulted in the gradual transition of Southern Rhodesia to becoming a settler colony.⁵⁰¹ However, this was a gradual change and company rule was still in effect until 1923, possibly because the British victory in 1902, the creation of the South African Union in 1910 and the outbreak of war in 1914 delayed the process.

⁴⁹⁸ D. George Boyce (ed.), *The Crisis of British Power. The Imperial and Naval Papers of the Second Earl of Selborne, 1895-1910* (London, 1990), 8.

⁴⁹⁹ Memorandum, 26 March 1896, in Boyce, *The Crisis of British Power*, 34.

⁵⁰⁰ Ibid., 36.

⁵⁰¹ Ranger, *Revolt in Southern Rhodesia*, 366.

But the 1896 rebellion posed serious changes to the administration of Southern Rhodesia. The settlers welcomed further governmental control, particularly since the situation after the rebellion had left the administration of both Mashona and Matabeleland marginal, particularly in Mashonaland to the north.⁵⁰² Furthermore, the situation in Southern Rhodesia was ‘not only unsatisfactory, but dangerous.’ Therefore, the government limited company rule by removing its right to make new ordinances and by creating a new administrative framework.⁵⁰³ In the 1898 Order, it was agreed that the Administrator of Southern Rhodesia should still be appointed and paid by the BSAC, but would only assume office upon the approval of the Secretary of State in London.⁵⁰⁴ Furthermore, there was to be established a ‘legislative council’ consisting of five members chosen by the BSAC and four chosen by the settlers in addition to the Administrator and Resident Commissioner.⁵⁰⁵ Eventually, this council was overtaken by the settlers, and, as L.H. Gann has observed, the 1898 Order laid the foundations for settler rule in 1923.⁵⁰⁶ However, most importantly, the BSAC retained its mineral rights, even in land which had been allocated to the Ndebele. On this issue, the 1898 Order was very similar in its wording of §51 of the 1894 Order:

If the Company should require any such land [Land allocated to the Ndebele] for the purpose of mineral development or as sites of townships, or for railways or other public works, the Administrator in Executive Council, may, with the approval of the High Commissioner, order the natives to remove from such land or any portion thereof, and shall assign to them just and liberal compensation in land elsewhere... sufficient and suitable for their agricultural and pastoral requirements, containing a fair and equitable proportion of springs or permanent water, and, as far as possible, equally suitable for the requirements in all respects as the land from which they are ordered to remove.⁵⁰⁷

Compared to the pre-1896 mineral rights, this legislation incurred significantly more control from the High Commissioner in Cape Town, whereas previously only the Land Commission had needed to grant approval. Although the ‘native lands’ were still susceptible for company takeover if they were found to hold mineral wealth, the requirements for the new lands on which the relocated Ndebele were to settle were now more explicitly stated. Of course, this did not mean that the Ndebele were in an improved situation, but it indicates that there was a general tendency to seek further control over company administration relating to ‘native policies’.

⁵⁰² TNA: CO 879/53: CO to FO, 23 September 1898.

⁵⁰³ L.H. Gann, *A History of Southern Rhodesia from its Early Days to 1934* (London, 1965), 142-44

⁵⁰⁴ TNA: CO 879/53: Southern Rhodesia Order in Council, 20 October 1898, enclosed in Chamberlain to Milner, 21 October 1898, Articles 8.1 and 12.1.

⁵⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, Article 17.1.

⁵⁰⁶ Gann, *A History of Southern Rhodesia*, 144.

⁵⁰⁷ TNA: CO 879/53: Southern Rhodesia Order in Council, 20 October 1898, enclosed in Chamberlain to Milner, 21 October 1898, 84.

After the 1898 Order in Council had been agreed, there were still several issues that had to be addressed. In fact, it was suggested that the legislative power of the BSAC should be completely removed and that the Company should be disbanded, in the same way as the arguments put forward by the government after the Jameson Raid in 1895. Moreover, according to Prime Minister Salisbury, the administration of Northern Rhodesia should be placed under the control of the commissioner at Zomba in present-day Malawi.⁵⁰⁸ In 1894, any administration of the territory would need to be endowed by the Crown and therefore it had full authority to make the provision for the governing of Southern Rhodesia at that time. However, the government decided against annexation, since they believed that ‘under the existing system there were serious objections to the creation of a Crown colony in that region, or to placing Matabeleland under the direct administration of the High Commissioner.’⁵⁰⁹ Annexation of the Company’s territory was not without precedent: indeed, when the Imperial British East Africa Company went bankrupt in 1894, Uganda became a British protectorate.⁵¹⁰ But in Southern Rhodesia, the government instead sought to establish itself as a more powerful entity for political reasons, as Rhodes and the BSAC remained too significant and powerful to annex. Furthermore, there were prevalent concerns about the expenses it would incur. Outright annexation would not only anger influential stakeholders in the City of London: it would also transfer the expenses to being the responsibility of the British state. But to make sure it was not liable even after the extension of governmental control in Southern Rhodesia, an article was included in a supplementary charter to the 1898 Order to prevent any misunderstandings and cases made by the BSAC or other actors regarding financial matters.⁵¹¹

Although Southern Rhodesia did not end up being under the direct control of the government after the rebellion, intentions to assume full control were clearly genuine; in fact, the CO had consulted judicial officers in order to establish whether or not they would be legally allowed to do so. The verdict was that Southern Rhodesia was to be considered a British Domain and could therefore be considered a protectorate.⁵¹² More precisely, this meant that ‘a regulation after promulgation can be disallowed by a Secretary of State or by

⁵⁰⁸ TNA: CO 879/53: CO to BSAC, 30 December 1898.

⁵⁰⁹ Palley, *The Constitutional History*, 111-12.

⁵¹⁰ Casper Andersen and Andrew Cohen (eds.), *The Government and Administration of Africa, 1880-1939* (London, 2013), x.

⁵¹¹ Palley, *The Constitutional History*, 129-30 and SHL: DT 970: Draft of a supplemental Charter of the British South Africa Company, §8.

⁵¹² TNA: CO 879/53: Law Officers to CO, 29 October 1898.

the Company within one year.⁵¹³ The ambitions of the government, therefore, remained clear: the aspiration was that Southern Rhodesia was to become a self-governing colony like that of the Cape and Natal and should in time enter into a South African Federation, or, as it were, Union.⁵¹⁴ However, Southern Rhodesia did not enter into the Union but remained independent, as fully reiterated in the unilateral declaration and ultimate separation from the British Empire in 1965.

But at the crux of these geopolitical and intra-imperial negotiations and antagonisms, the role of colonial rule and violence remained central. The excesses of the BSAC had not only invited government ambitions to include Southern Rhodesia in their imperial policies towards Southern Africa; they had also facilitated a move to make sure Southern Rhodesia fitted within the British sphere in order to keep it as cohesive as possible. For British officials in London, therefore, the second Ndebele war was a political and moral turning-point for colonialism in Southern Africa, as it was here that they could reveal the government to be a force in colonial matters in which it lived up the responsibilities as expected by the public and contemporary morality alike.

Conclusion

Martin Wiener's aforementioned proposition that law played a paradoxical role – on the one hand facilitating criticism of colonialism by putting it on trial, and on the other making the subjugation of the colonised lawful – adheres well to the situation in Southern Rhodesia around the 1896 rebellion. In the case of Southern Rhodesia, however, the collision between humanitarian ideals and the authoritarian nature of colonial rule was more complex due to the presence of the BSAC. The government and company relations pertaining to 'native administration' was not a clear case of empire being put on trial directly, but indirectly through a private enterprise. Company rule in Southern Rhodesia was certainly put on trial, however, in two interconnected ways: through the Jameson Raid and the subsequent disclosure of the maladministration of the indigenous population.

The scandal of the Jameson Raid had damaged British imperial prestige at home and abroad, but by imposing new regulations and pointing to certain scapegoats, officials both exonerated themselves from responsibility *and* attempted to replenish their moral capital by

⁵¹³ LSE: DT 751: The British South Africa Company, Report on the Company's proceedings and the conditions of the territories within the sphere of its operation, 1896-1897, April 1898, 1-2.

⁵¹⁴ Palley, *The Constitutional History*, 132.

exposing company misrule in Southern Rhodesia and acting thereon. This shows that there was a need for humanitarian principles to be in place for colonial rule to be justified. When they were broken, it was the duty of the British government to intervene and make sure that such principles remained at the crux of their imperial project to safeguard Britain's respectability at home and overseas.

Indeed, Britain's respectability and prestige were at stake, and therefore the conduct of the military and company rule came under scrutiny. In terms of military conduct, we are not only faced with a case of technological overmatch, which spawned psychological overconfidence, but also with a high degree of brutality in the way the war was fought, especially when British forces were engaged in a guerrilla skirmish in the Matopos. This latter applies to both sides, as the conduct of the rebels in the initial stages cannot be condoned and the excesses of the imperial troops in the Matopos were equally brutal. Yet for the official mind, maintaining an image of a war fought along the lines of 'civilised behaviour' was essential and hence the inquiries into individual incidents of the breaking of protocol remained an important aspect. Indicatively, as has been shown, military practices were monitored by officials to prevent scandals emerging from military excesses, and when sensitive cases were reported on, these were suppressed to prevent further circulation. This shows that at least from an administrative – or rather, legalistic – view, colonial wars were ill-conceived by the official mind. Thus, it was a concern for the ideological framework of empire in which humanitarianism and the civilising mission would be directly contradicted and exhibited to the public. Hence, where British officials had a direct and judicial responsibility – i.e. when dispatching troops to Southern Rhodesia – they were at the same time keen to make sure no atrocities were committed, if not for purely humane reasons, then for political.

What is therefore evident is that the British official mind was faced with a paradox: on the one hand, a defeat would be disastrous, and thus they sought to win the war with every means necessary. On the other hand, it had to be done on what were considered as civilised terms which were effectuated in scrutinising the conduct of military personnel. However, the great contradiction that came to the fore was that they allowed and publicly defended the practice of blowing up caves, whereas they adamantly refused any provision for indentured or forced labour. In other words, violence could be justified as a regrettable consequence of war, whereas coercion and labour conditions, which could be lamented as similar to slavery, were inexcusable. This was the main issue at stake during the post-rebellion negotiations where the CO adamantly refused any clause that would ostensibly allow for forced labour to be obtained. Despite being argued against by referring to the allegedly positive effect that forced labour would have on the 'native mind', humanitarian persuasion

and the prevailing anti-slavery doctrine were simply too strong to amend in the metropole, regardless of colonial interests and practicalities which would in this case have benefited the BSAC's financial situation.

British officials' perception of company rule changed over time in accordance to the situation of both company and empire. Initially, it was welcomed as an easy and inexpensive way to secure the interior of Southern Africa, but the BSAC continued to be a difficult sub-imperial agent to keep in line with British imperial interests as seen from Whitehall. In 1896, the situation was dire for the British government, as both the war and the Jameson Raid had led to public and international criticism. The responsibility of the government regarding maladministration was that they had allowed the BSAC to expand by the charter and initially left them with a *carte blanche* in terms of governing Matabeleland in the 1894 Order in Council. As the APS lamented in 1897, the introduction of Company administration in Matabeleland was 'haphazard' and done by 'amateurs, profiteers and men motivated by greed' and therefore allowed the BSAC to assume full control with little governmental influence.⁵¹⁵ Indeed, with the charter including paragraphs echoing the Berlin Treaty, the government had already attempted to distance itself from responsibility by disallowing, on paper, company interferences with African tribes. This evidences how Whitehall in Southern Rhodesia saw fit to restrain a sub-imperial actor that already had, and could in future, further problematise British strategic and imperial interests in the region while also possibly dragging the government into debates and scandals pertaining to company misrule due to its legal responsibility.

However, after 1896 the strategy towards the BSAC changed. By emphasising administrative excesses, the CO diverted the humanitarian responsibility and blame to the BSAC. The issue of forced labour, in particular, was one that the government could effectively put to use in light of lobby groups such as the APS and the general public. The threat that was posed by company rule in Southern Rhodesia was that it highlighted the contradictory morality of empire: that violence and oppression went hand in hand with the alleged humanitarian ideals of civilisation and that emancipation was imposed through dominance. Whitehall, therefore, not only responded to financial and geopolitical concerns, but also to public opinion both as an immediate reaction and also as an expectancy of a given reaction: i.e., they pre-emptively responded to a public opinion that was not yet formulated but merely had the potential to spark public criticism or even scandal.

⁵¹⁵ Fox Bourne, *Matabeleland and Chartered Company*, 19.

Furthermore, in a broader geopolitical perspective, the British government were both interested in and compelled by domestic and international expectancy in the wake of the Jameson Raid to make sure that the BSAC did not become a renegade authority that they would be unable to contain. Thus, by adopting humanitarianism as a policy towards the BSAC, the *direct* responsibility of the CO and government was avoided. By exposing the maladministration of the Company during the investigations of the Jameson Raid, the government diverted attention away from the excesses of the imperial forces in the Matopos and the fact that their hitherto laissez-faire policy towards company rule had furnished maladministration.

The post-war situation therefore facilitated an opportunity for the government to put a leash on Rhodes and the BSAC, safeguarding Southern Rhodesia in the increasingly complex puzzle of Southern Africa where British imperial policy was being threatened by Boers and Germans in particular. Indeed, it secured Southern Rhodesia as an ally in Selborne's Southern African imperial project. This gradual governmental influence and restraining of the BSAC follows Janice Thompson's argument that non-governmental actors initially acted freely and could violently subjugate locals. Later, however, government sought to ratify and control these actors.⁵¹⁶ However, the opportunity to restrain the BSAC did not arise on its own. In fact, it was the Ndebele people who, in taking up arms, forced the British government to intervene and oversee future legislation. When the Company broke humanitarian principles as laid down in the various regulations, the CO were also compelled to impose more surveillance and control – at least on paper. Despite these treaties and obligations, they were not necessarily followed, as demonstrated by the ongoing use of forced labour.⁵¹⁷ Indeed, Chibaro continued to exist.⁵¹⁸ Furthermore, with the turn towards the creation of an agrarian economy attracting more settlers, the Africans also saw the takeover of their lands. Nevertheless, immediately after 1896, the rights given to the BSAC were far from based on mere commercial and geopolitical interests of the British state: they were also based upon humanitarianism – both as an ideology and as a policy rooted in *realpolitik* and public opinion.

The expression of such humanitarian views against coercion, instead demanding a greater deal of protection, it also constituted a discourse in which indigenous cultures were,

⁵¹⁶ Janice Thompson, *Mercenaries, Pirates, and Sovereigns: State-Building and Extra-territorial violence in Early Modern Europe* (Princeton, 1994), 145. Also cited in Andersen, 'Handelskompagniet British South Africa Company', 115.

⁵¹⁷ Kevin Grant, *A Civilised Savagery: Britain and the New Slavery in Africa, 1884-1926* (New York, 2005), 4.

⁵¹⁸ Cooper, 'Conditions analogous to Slavery', 131.

by definition, weak and in need of active 'help'.⁵¹⁹ The civilising mission, therefore, in becoming an ideology of protection, also became an expansionist ideology. This was the great contradiction at the crux of the very identity of the British Empire: the brutal expansion through 'savage wars of peace' and the establishment of coercive administration while at the same time attempting to civilise and free the supposedly lesser races from cruelty and enslavement. It was a collision between the spread of British humanitarian ideals and the authoritarian nature of imperial rule.

⁵¹⁹ Porter, 'Trusteeship, Anti-Slavery and Humanitarianism', 217.

3 The Herero-Nama War in German Southwest Africa, 1904-1908

Introduction

In 1904, having been subjected to continuous oppression, violence and injustices by settlers, officers and administrators, the Herero under the leadership of Chief Samuel Maherero, took up arms in a desperate bid to oust German colonial rule from their land. The rebellion came on 12 January 1904 and struck the Germans with complete surprise.⁵²⁰ Immediately, the Herero were superior and swept across Hereroland – the western parts of GSWA. Over 100 German settlers were killed by the rebels and these killings soon caused great anger and resentment throughout the German Empire.⁵²¹ Indeed, as Horst Drechsler noted, the Herero rebellion ‘marked the beginning of Germany’s bloodiest and most protracted colonial war.’⁵²²

GSWA was in many ways a desolate colony with little economic or strategic importance. Germany’s annexation of the territory was considered peculiar by many, but at the same time was also typical of the nature of the imperialist scramble for Africa. From the British perspective, they now had to deal with the fact that Germany, a European rival, had acquired a considerable portion of land in their colonial backyard, thus affecting the wider policies and international relations concerning the Boer republics.⁵²³ The Herero-Nama war and subsequent genocide in GSWA remains one of the darkest periods of colonial history. As mentioned earlier, the Blue Book’s exact figure of 92,258 victims is contestable and is probably part of the British strategy at Versailles, where a high mortality rate would only serve to highlight German colonial maladministration. However, the exact figures also remain uncertain in the scholarly literature. For instance, Jeremy Sarkin notes that somewhere between 60,000 and 100,000 Herero and Nama were killed between 1904 and 1908.⁵²⁴ Although estimations regarding the victims of the brutal methods employed by the Germans

⁵²⁰ Horst Drechsler, *Let us Die Fighting*, 132.

⁵²¹ Israel Goldblatt, *History of South-West Africa from the Beginning of the Nineteenth Century* (Cape Town, 1971), 131.

⁵²² Drechsler, *Let us Die Fighting*, 144.

⁵²³ See Jeffrey Butler, ‘The German Factor in Anglo-Transvaal Relations’ in Gifford and Louis (eds.), *Britain and Germany in Africa*

⁵²⁴ Jeremy Sarkin, *Colonial Genocide and Reparations Claims in the 21st Century: The Socio-Legacy Context of Claims under International Law by the Herero against Germany for Genocide in Namibia, 1904-1908* (Westport CN, 2008), 5.

are uncertain, there can be little doubt as to the genocidal intentions. Indeed, General Lothar von Trotha made his intentions to seek the physical extermination of the Herero and later the Nama clear by issuing the infamous *Vernichtungsbefehl* [extermination order] in which every Herero and Nama was to be shot at sight or driven into the desert. Yet these atrocities have almost exclusively been studied from a German standpoint, ignoring others, such as that of the British neighbour. Only recently have scholars highlighted the role of the British Empire in this affair. In particular, Tilman Dederling and Ulrike Lindner have pointed to various cases of collaboration, entanglement and involvement.⁵²⁵

The Herero and Nama genocide, which came in the wake of the rebellions in 1904, has long been seen as a ‘forgotten genocide’.⁵²⁶ In recent years, however, increasing attention has finally claimed these terrible events’ rightful place in the history books. Nevertheless, the British neighbour in Southern Africa has generally remained a marginal factor in the attempts to disclose the horrors that unfolded. Therefore, by applying a transnational approach in which German colonial administration is examined through British contemporaries, this case study will attempt to place these atrocities in a wider regional and imperial context. Its main focus is thereby not on the understanding of the experiences of the victims of the genocide – and of colonialism in general – but more on the methods of colonial rule and how these were perceived and responded to by British officials.

While the previous case study on Southern Rhodesia showed how Whitehall perceived and dealt with colonial excesses within their own sphere of influence, this case study will disclose how Britain perceived such excesses outside their direct sphere of influence. It will therefore examine whether there was consistency in how British officials perceived colonial scandals, whether or not they were within their immediate sphere of control and responsibility. More precisely, it will disclose how Britain and Germany interacted to end the conflict and what was at stake. Here, ideologies of humanitarianism, and outright practices of racism intersected broader Anglo-German relations and British imperial interests. It can therefore reveal how moralities and convictions of colonial rule and violence had an impact on British imperial and foreign policy.

⁵²⁵ Both have made numerous publications on the matter, but see, as already mentioned, Lindner, *Koloniale Begegnungen* and Tilman Dederling, ‘War and Mobility in the Borderlands of South Western Africa in the Early Twentieth Century’, *The International Journal of African Historical Studies*, 39, 2 (2006).

⁵²⁶ Casper W. Erichsen, ‘A Forgotten History – Concentration camps were used by the Germans in South West Africa’, *The Mail and Guardian, Johannesburg*, 17 August 2001.

Historiography and Methodological Considerations

The approach aims to examine how colonial violence and excesses were perpetrated, perceived and ultimately used diplomatically. Indeed, this case study will highlight the ways in which British officials and local agents not only corresponded internally and with the German authorities during the war and genocide, but also how they collaborated and were a direct part of the bloodshed that unfolded. The entanglement of British and German colonialism in Southern Africa during the Herero-Nama War is therefore crucial to this study. Additionally, it is not merely an analysis of British perceptions of the war and genocide in GSWA: it is also a study of German colonial administration, and hence it will first discuss how the Herero and Nama were gradually subjugated by the encroaching German colonial expansion. Then the place of the indigenous peoples in German colonial policies as well as the ambitions of a German overseas empire will be analysed, as it is crucial to understand the functions and operations of GSWA and German colonialism in its own right before ascertaining the involvement and perceptions of the British.

This case study will combine both British and German source material. More precisely, it will approach the topic by cross-examining official source material from the Bundesarchiv, Berlin and the National Archives in Kew, where especially Foreign and Colonial Office records reveal the British perceptions and reactions to the unfolding of the crisis across the border. However, since this case study does not include sources from the Namibian archives nor from the colonised, it is important to stress that it does not seek, in any way, to call for revision of the genocide, nor to for a questioning of the extent of the violence that unfolded. Instead, the focus here is on what officials in London and Berlin did and what they thought of the conflict and subsequent genocide. Whereas the former chapter on Southern Rhodesia showed how British officials in Whitehall gradually grew frustrated with Company rule and eventually intervened in order to impose more control and to exonerate themselves from humanitarian responsibility, it is also worth discussing whether such actions were taken in an international light: in other words, whether humanitarianism – as a policy and critique – was an exogenous force as well as an endogenous one.

As mentioned, connections to the Namibian struggle for independence have been influential in the historiography of GSWA. However, it is clear that most recent literature places itself in the colonial *Sonderweg* and consequently, this is also where this case study is mainly focused. Since the genocide in GSWA has been termed the ‘first genocide of the twentieth century’, and since it was committed by Germany, this historic event has often been seen in the context

of the Holocaust.⁵²⁷ *Sonderweg*, directly translated, means ‘special path’, and stipulates that Germany’s historical development since unification in 1871 was special and unique. In a somewhat deterministic spirit, it suggests that there was continuity from Bismarck to Hitler, thus suggesting that the Holocaust was the outcome of a long-standing trajectory that is almost inherent in German history. In post-war Europe, most scholarly attention to German history sought to explore the roots of the Nazi Empire based on the contention that the Second World War and the Holocaust were European imperialism turned on itself.⁵²⁸

Fritz Fischer and later Hans-Ulrich Wehler were the first to advocate the *Sonderweg* in the 1960s. Until then, the dominant question in German history – why and how Hitler came to power – was interpreted as the result of relatively random and unfortunate developments (*Betriebsunfall*) such as the ramifications of the Versailles Treaty and the 1929 Stock Market Crash. Instead, Wehler and Fischer suggested that the historical developments of Germany were far from coincidental, but were indeed the results of continuities and dynamics inherent in German bourgeois culture and society.⁵²⁹ As Wolfgang Mommsen later argued, in Germany there was a ‘revolution from above’ wherein democracy never truly developed and the constitutional framework from the Bismarck era therefore allowed totalitarianism to persist.⁵³⁰

In relation to German colonialism, Wehler, for instance, focused on the idea of social imperialism, which suggested that Bismarck’s sudden turn to colonies in 1884 (*Weltpolitik*) was a bid to maintain a social hierarchy and to prevent turmoil within Germany, rather than to secure overseas stakes and interests. It was an exogenous force directed by the socio-economic situation in Germany, which was suffering from rapid urbanisation, industrialisation and economic crisis, prompting instability and threats of revolutions from, for instance, socialists: hence the term ‘social imperialism’, where the social hierarchy could be preserved. Moreover, in addition to diverting attention outwards, colonial expansion was also believed to break the negative cycle in the German economy.⁵³¹ Hence, the *Sonderweg* is a rather Eurocentric approach to colonialism, where Germany’s and Bismarck’s intention of

⁵²⁷ The so-called *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* (‘coming to terms with the past’) of post-World War II Germany, has arguably mainly been focused on the crimes of National Socialism rather than those of Germany’s colonial past.

⁵²⁸ This was most popularly stipulated by Hanna Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (New York, 1951) and Aimé Césaire, *Discourse on Colonialism*, translated by Joan Pinkham [orig. 1955] (New York, 2000).

⁵²⁹ See, for instance, Hans-Ulrich Wehler, ‘Bismarck’s Imperialism 1862-1890’, *Past & Present*, 48 (1970) and Fritz Fischer, *Germany’s Aims in the First World War* [orig. 1961] (New York, 1968). The latter in particular is important as it was contended that Germany was the main culprit in the outbreak of war in 1914.

⁵³⁰ Wolfgang Mommsen, *Der Autoritäre Nationalstaat. Verfassung, Gesellschaft und Kultur in deutschen Kaiserreich* (Frankfurt-am-Main, 1990).

⁵³¹ Wehler, ‘Bismarck’s Imperialism’, 153.

‘claiming a place in the sun’ was directed by internal pressures and interests and discourses of nationalism. Central to the *Sonderweg* thesis, therefore, is the notion of German exceptionalism. If Germany took a special path that inevitably had to end in the First and later, the Second World War and the Holocaust, then Germany, per definition, was (and is) exceptional. Of course, one could simply suggest that all countries (or other historical entities) are exceptional, but while this criticism is true, it is far from sufficient to disprove or scrutinise the *Sonderweg*. Important to note here, therefore, is the still prevalent notion that Germany’s past – including its colonial past – is being considered exceptional and inherently different in a negative light. What may therefore be termed the continuity thesis, or at least the notion of German exceptionalism, is still an influential discourse in German historiography.

In fact, a new *Sonderweg* has been revived by the increased exposure of the Herero and Nama genocide and has formulated what has been termed the ‘colonial *Sonderweg*’.⁵³² Considering the genocidal horrors that unfolded in GSWA, this event has been considered a direct colonial precursor to the Holocaust. This view has especially been advocated by Jürgen Zimmerer who contends the genocide was not merely a grim inspiration to the Holocaust but was also a decisive causal factor in the rise of Nazi Germany, as it was the first ‘break’ with taboo which rationalised and allowed for the mass exterminations in the Holocaust.⁵³³

Despite claims that the *Sonderweg* is no longer the dominating tendency in German history,⁵³⁴ this notion still persists when it comes to the study of GSWA and German colonialism. Numerous titles on the Herero and Nama genocide, such as David Olusoga and Casper Erichsen’s *The Kaiser’s Holocaust* (2010), which suggests continuity in terms of racist ideas and practices, and Jeremy Sarkin’s *Germany’s Genocide* (2010), which claims that a direct connection was evident between the practices in GSWA and those in Holocaust, are indicative of a still existing *Sonderweg*.⁵³⁵ Another example is Isabel Hull, who argues that there was a military culture that was carried on from the colonies to the Third Reich.⁵³⁶ These examples indicate that an implicit *Sonderweg* is influential upon how GSWA is examined to

⁵³² Matt Fitzpatrick, ‘The Pre-History of the Holocaust?’, 486.

⁵³³ Zimmerer, *Von Windbuk nach Auschwitz?*. For the English reader see Jürgen Zimmerer and Joachim Zeller (eds.), *Genocide in German South-West Africa: The Colonial War of 1904-1908 and its Aftermath*, translated by E.J. Neather (London, 2008) and Jürgen Zimmerer, ‘Annihilation in Africa: The “Race War” in German Southwest Africa (1904-1908) and its significance for a Global History of Genocide’, *The German Institute Bulletin*, 37 (2005).

⁵³⁴ Heinrich Winkler, *Germany: The Long Road West*, trans. by Alexander Sager (New York, 2006), Vol. 1, 1-2.

⁵³⁵ Olusoga and Erichsen, *Kaiser’s Holocaust*. More indicatively is Jeremy Sarkin, *Germany’s Genocide*.

⁵³⁶ Isabel Hull, *Absolute Destruction: Military Culture and the Practices of War in Imperial Germany* (New York, 2006).

this day, but they remain implicit, as they do not intend to uncover the roots nor causes of the Third Reich, but to rather contextualise their studies to it. Thus, instead of attempting to find the roots of totalitarianism, these works are seeking to uncover the consequences of German colonialism. The answer is the same – that it ended in genocide – but the approach by which it is reached is turned upside down. As Matt Fitzpatrick has rightly noted, continuities exist, but are subtle. It is therefore unsatisfying to replace the simplistic etiquette of continuity, ‘From Bismarck to Hitler’ with a ‘From Waterberg to Auschwitz’ narrative.⁵³⁷ Therefore, the notion of German exceptionalism continues to be a deep-rooted tendency in the understanding of Germany’s history, whether colonial or not.⁵³⁸

GSWA and German history, in general, has recently been subject to several transnational approaches. However, transnational history does not in itself repudiate the existence of continuity between the Third Reich and German colonialism and therefore historians are still encouraged to break the illusion of German exceptionalism.⁵³⁹ As Sebastian Conrad and Birthe Kundrus have shown separately, many parallels are evident between colonialism in Africa and the excesses of the Nazi Empire, however, the ‘colonialism’ of the Third Reich was a different kind of ‘colonialism’.⁵⁴⁰ However, parallels do not, *per se*, prove continuity or causality, but instead indicate connectivity through time and space, which may be similar, but is not necessarily correlated.

With the recent turn towards transnational history, however, GSWA and German colonialism, in general, is increasingly being approached from another angle. As previously mentioned, Lindner has shown how Anglo-German colonialism interacted and worked together in what she terms a ‘colonial project.’ Relying on source material from Britain, Germany and Africa, Lindner has provided an insightful and comprehensive account of how administrators co-operated, although there is a tendency to emphasise the German aspect of the relationship rather than the British.⁵⁴¹ Albeit minuscule, the attention to Britain in the history of GSWA is therefore not non-existent. Another example is R.F. Dreyer’s *The Mind of Official Imperialism* (1987) which, in many ways, applies the methodology and theoretical framework developed by Robinson and Gallagher to the Anglo-German context concerning

⁵³⁷ Matt Fitzpatrick, Review of Jürgen Zimmerer and Jürgen Zeller (eds.), *Völkermord in Deutsch-Südwestafrika: Der Kolonialkrieg (1904-1908) in Namibia und seine Folgen*, H-Net Reviews, February 2005. <http://www.h-net.org/reviews/showrev.php?id=10206> (accessed February 16, 2017).

⁵³⁸ Ulrike Lindner, ‘German Colonialism and the British neighbour in Africa before 1914’ in Volger Langbehn and Mohammad Salama (eds.), *German Colonialism-Race, the Holocaust and Postwar Germany* (New York, 2011), 255.

⁵³⁹ See Conrad and Osterhammel (eds.), *Das Kaiserreich transnational*.

⁵⁴⁰ Sebastian Conrad, *German Colonialism: A Short History* (Cambridge, 2012), 4. See also Birthe Kundrus, ‘From the Herero to Holocaust? Some Remarks on the Current Debate’, *Africa Spectrum*, 40, 2 (2005).

⁵⁴¹ Lindner, *Koloniale Begegnungen*, 458.

the early years of GSWA.⁵⁴² Dreyer's book resembles the view of Anglo-German relations at the time, as being steeped in a spirit of antagonism as perhaps most convincingly studied by Paul Kennedy in his monumental *The Rise of Anglo-German Antagonism* (1980).⁵⁴³ In Southern Africa, Dreyer observes that the Kruger Telegram in 1896 was a crucial turning point in Anglo-German relations, revealing how international relations were a core dynamic of imperialism in Africa. For instance, where Britain had little problem with Germany taking over GSWA in 1884, they still maintained the strategically important enclave of Walvis Bay. Furthermore, Britain's acceptance towards having a German neighbour, changed as gold was found in 1886 in Witwatersrand and Anglo-German relations were further complicated with the establishment of the South West African Company – a British and South African-based company working in GSWA. Indeed, as Dreyer shows, the German government invited British companies to invest in GSWA to kick-start the economy.⁵⁴⁴ It is, therefore, inviting to further examine the British and South African entanglements with GSWA and how this may have affected Britain's stance and perceptions in later years.

The Colonial Beginnings of GSWA: Policies and Entanglements

Similar to Southern Rhodesia, German expansion into GSWA was initially pioneered by a private enterprise. After German businessman Frederick Lüderitz had established a trading post in the Bay of Angra Pequena in 1884, the German government claimed South-West Africa as a German protectorate (*Schutzgebiet*). GSWA was a desolate territory with little economic or prestigious gain to be found. In fact, Drechsler describes it as 'one of the most inaccessible regions of Africa. Along the coast is the Namib, a sandy desert 50 to 70 kilometres wide, that makes it difficult to reach the interior, and in the eastern part the Kalahari has the same effect.'⁵⁴⁵ Nevertheless, it soon became part of an imperial project for the newly unified Germany, which sought to claim its 'place in the sun', competing with its European rivals, including the British as part of the new *Weltpolitik*.⁵⁴⁶ Again, similar to Southern Rhodesia, the economy of GSWA was based on cattle herding for the indigenous

⁵⁴² See Dreyer, *Mind of Official Imperialism*. For a newer similar study of Anglo-German relations in this traditional view see Matthew Seligmann, *Rivalry in Southern Africa 1893-99: The Transformation of German Colonial Policy* (Basingstoke, 1998).

⁵⁴³ Kennedy, *Anglo-German Antagonism*.

⁵⁴⁴ Dreyer, *Mind of Official Imperialism*, 98-109.

⁵⁴⁵ Drechsler, *Let us Die Fighting*, 17.

⁵⁴⁶ Friedrich Fabri, 'Bedarf Deutschland der Kolonien, 1879' in Sidney Pollard and Colin Holmes (eds.), *Documents of European Economic History*, Vol. II (London, 1979), 170-71.

population as well as the settlers. GSWA was an intended settler colony in which Germany hoped to divert the exodus of immigrants leaving for America to a German colony instead.⁵⁴⁷ Soon GSWA became a romanticised colony, where the settler lifestyle became appreciated as a positive racial trait of a hardworking farmer, creating a German *Heimat* away from home.⁵⁴⁸ While Lüderitz was perhaps the first actual town to be established, others soon followed: Swakopmund, close to the British Walvis Bay enclave became an important harbour for German operations. Windhoek (Windhuk during the German era) in the centre of the colony, Namibia's current capital, also became a central point of operation, as it controlled the plateaus on which cattle herding was prevalent, but was not a noteworthy settlement until later, when the interior had been fully subjugated.⁵⁴⁹ The pre-colonial composition of Namibia was divided into three large groups; the Herero, the Nama and the Ovambo. These comprised many smaller clans and tribes linked by culture, language and history.⁵⁵⁰ Many Herero and Nama clans had family and relatives residing within British territory, thus linking the connections between British and German territory even further. The Herero occupied most of the central parts of GSWA, while their ancient enemy, the Nama mainly resided in the south.

The German presence in GSWA was at first marginal. The first Imperial Commissioner, R.E Göring, father to Hermann Göring of the later Luftwaffe, attempted in 1896 to subjugate the indigenous peoples, especially the Herero, to German rule through treaties. But it was not until he was replaced by Curt von François – a man of military background who had served, among other places, in the Congo Free State – that a small but permanent military presence was established, which led to the beginnings of a German civil administration in GSWA.⁵⁵¹ According to Alison Palmer, the colonial state structure in GSWA 'fused both civil and military elements, with much administration performed by army officers.'⁵⁵² This is true; however, considering the number of German troops in GSWA prior to the 1904 rebellion, this overlap between military and civil elements was perhaps more administrative than political. In 1890, there was only a German force of seventy in GSWA, while in 1904 this had increased to about 14,000.⁵⁵³ Arguably, the reason why the military

⁵⁴⁷ Conrad, *German Colonialism*, 156.

⁵⁴⁸ Daniel Steinbach, 'Carved out of Nature'.

⁵⁴⁹ Drechsler, *Let us Die Fighting*, 49-50.

⁵⁵⁰ Alison Palmer, 'Colonial Genocides: Aborigines in Queensland, 1840-1897, and Hereros in South West Africa, 1884-1906' (London School of Economics and Political Science, D. Phil Thesis, 1993), 225.

⁵⁵¹ Palmer, 'Colonial Genocides', 229. See also Richard Voeltz, *German Colonialism and the South West Africa Company, 1884-1914* (Athens OH, 1988), 2.

⁵⁵² Palmer, 'Colonial Genocides', 229-30.

⁵⁵³ Voeltz, *German Colonialism*, 8.

presence is emphasised by many scholars is to prove the militaristic and perhaps even authoritarian roots of German history. If GSWA was a strictly militaristic colony, it would support claims of German exceptionalism and continuity to the Third Reich.

When GSWA was proclaimed to be under German control, there soon followed a treaty between the Germans and the Herero in 1888. This 'Treaty of Friendship' was, however, turned upside-down; it was the Herero who, supposedly, sought the protection of the German Kaiser: 'The Head Chief Maherero, guided with the wish to confirm the friendly relations in which he and his people have lived with the Germans for years, prays for His Majesty the German Emperor to take over the protection of himself and his people.'⁵⁵⁴ While such rhetoric in European-African treaties was not unique at the time, it nevertheless portrays the racial discrimination and civilising motivations inherent in colonialism. The more interesting aspect, however, may be jurisdictional; while this in many ways appears archetypal of the encroachment of European colonialism, it also shows that African authorities, albeit being seen as weak and savage, still held the *rights* to the land. Clearly, however, such treaties were not aimed at obtaining internal recognition from the Herero *per se*, but rather at international recognition to keep rivals at bay and expand German colonial rule in lieu of effective occupation, in a similar way to the treaties and concessions signed by Lobengula prior to 1893. Indeed, such international intentions were evident in article II of the same treaty, which stated that Samuel Maherero, the Head Chief of the Herero, 'undertakes not to transfer his country, nor any part of it, to any other nation or subject thereof, without the consent of His Majesty the German Emperor.'⁵⁵⁵

In return, the Herero people received the protection of the German Kaiser and recognition of their rights and the authority of Maherero. According to Drechsler, the conclusion of this treaty was a success for the settlers, as it ended the potential for confrontation with the Witbooi clan (Nama) and the Herero.⁵⁵⁶ The treaty also stated that 'German subjects' were 'bound to respect the existing customs and usages prevailing in the territory of Maherero.' Furthermore, they were also bound to pay taxes and stay within German penal laws.⁵⁵⁷ As was also the case in Southern Rhodesia, such treaties and legislation

⁵⁵⁴ BAB: R 1001/2104: Treaty of Protection and Friendship between the German Empire and the Hereros in Memorandum: 'The Germans in Damaraland' Robert Lewis, 22 January 1889, Article I. See also Nils Ole Oermann, *Mission, Church and State Relations in German South West Africa under German Rule (1884-1915)* (Stuttgart, 1999), 66.

⁵⁵⁵ BAB: R 1001/2104: Treaty of Protection and Friendship between the German Empire and the Hereros, Article II.

⁵⁵⁶ Drechsler, *Let us Die Fighting*, 27-28.

⁵⁵⁷ BAB: R 1001/2104: Treaty of Protection and Friendship between the German Empire and the Hereros, Article III.

were often violated. But nonetheless, it indicates that colonial rule, whether British or German, was expected to have certain moral standards. This also applied to the international context hereof where such treaties officially announced the formal control of Germany. However, it also meant that German colonial rule could be scrutinised both morally and legally, as Germany ostensibly had to uphold such treaties. Therefore, these treaties should not simply be discarded as irrelevant ‘excuses’ for empire, only designed to trick their victims. They also functioned as confinements in determining the responsibility of the colonising power in question.

Nevertheless, there can be little doubt that such treaties of ‘protection’ had more sinister intentions and were means of social and political control. Indicatively, German subjects as well as those ‘entitled to German protection living in Hereroland’ were ‘to be judged according to the German law in all disputes, both civil and criminal.’ In cases which involved German subjects against one or more Herero, these were to be reserved for ‘a special arrangement between the Government and the Chiefs in Hereroland.’ But since such arrangement was still not in place, these were ‘decided by the Imperial Commissioner.’⁵⁵⁸ In other words, until anything else had been agreed upon, the German authorities had full judicial control and power should there arise any legal issues between settlers and Herero.

In 1890 the Germans occupied the plains of Windhoek and established a settlement there. This area was well inside Herero territory, but due to their ongoing war with the Nama, the Herero, while being further antagonised by the Germans, still opted for German protection.⁵⁵⁹ Indeed, the war between the Herero and the Nama was crucial in how German colonialism gradually encroached in GSWA: it allowed them to build up their settlements and move inland, as the indigenous peoples were fighting amongst themselves, and were thus unable to put up efficient resistance. Therefore, when peace was concluded between the Herero and the Nama in November 1892, the political situation – particularly for the Germans in Windhoek – completely changed. Similar to Ranger’s stipulation regarding the African resistance in Rhodesia, Drechsler claims that the peace came as a ‘united African response’ to the advancement of German colonialism. While this underplays other interests and circumstances, it appears plausible, as von François had 214 troops dispatched to GSWA as a response.⁵⁶⁰ Indeed, the peace between the Herero and the Nama changed Berlin’s policy

⁵⁵⁸ Ibid., Article IV.

⁵⁵⁹ Drechsler, *Let us Die Fighting*, 50.

⁵⁶⁰ Ibid., 55.

towards GSWA from disinterest and following a policy where war was to be avoided to proactive engagement in the political affairs of the colony.

In an attempt to subject Nama Chief Hendrik Witbooi to a protection treaty which would finally accept German colonial authority, von François raided the Nama settlement of Hoornkranz in 1893, killing eighty women and children.⁵⁶¹ According to Witbooi, François made a surprise attack while he was sleeping and ‘he sacked my settlement, killing indiscriminately small children, women and men.’ Witbooi informed John Cleverly, the British Magistrate at Walvis Bay, about this and asked him to let both London and Berlin know of these atrocities and support him with rifles and ammunition against the Germans.⁵⁶² Cleverly, however, stated he could not help him with supplies, but promised to forward this information to Europe on the next ship. Regarding the violence, he noted that ‘I cannot understand how there could have been a killing of women and children. European nations do not make war in that way.’⁵⁶³

Witbooi seemed to have some relation or other with Cleverly at Walvis Bay as he had also visited him prior to the massacre at Hoornkranz and informed him that he did not understand why the Germans ruled SWA and that he instead sought to have British protection over the territory.⁵⁶⁴ The reason for Witbooi’s visit to Cleverly seems to have been to express his discontent with German rule and to complain about their general misrule over GSWA. He gave explicit statements about his experiences, thus revealing that the British government had reports on German mismanagement early on, although Witbooi’s statements were most likely deemed exaggerations. This may also have been the reason behind the reply Witbooi received from the British.

The British Government has promised Germany not to interfere in certain parts of [South] West Africa among which is your district, and it is impossible to take back that promise. That the British Government has no knowledge of and is in no way responsible for anything that may have been done in those countries over which German Protection is exercised, and would advise if you have any complaints, to lay them before the German Imperial Commissioner at Windhoek.⁵⁶⁵

In many ways this was, as shall be shown, a precedent for British policy vis-à-vis GSWA: a policy of non-intervention despite detailed knowledge of what unfolded. Indeed, as Witbooi was expressly informed, ‘the Colonial Government therefore, cannot interfere in any matter occurring within the area of the German Protectorate.’

⁵⁶¹ Ibid., 69-71.

⁵⁶² Hendrik Witbooi to John Cleverly, 20 April 1893 in Annemarie Heywood and Eben Maasdorp, *The Hendrik Witbooi Papers* (Windhoek, 1990), 117-18.

⁵⁶³ Cleverly to Witbooi, 25 April 1893, in Heywood and Maasdorp, *Hendrik Witbooi Papers*, 119.

⁵⁶⁴ Cleverly to J. Rose Innes, Under-Secretary of Native Affairs, Cape Town, 13 March 1893, in Heywood and Maasdorp, *Hendrik Witbooi Papers*, 161.

⁵⁶⁵ Innes to Witbooi, 16 January 1893, Appendix 1 in Heywood and Maasdorp, *Hendrik Witbooi Papers*, 161.

The ensuing conflict between Witbooi and the Germans – who were largely confined to operations near Windhoek – dragged on and caused much resentment in GSWA towards François, who was blamed for causing it. Traders were unable to conduct their business, and when François failed to safeguard the interests of the German Southwest Africa Company, he also lost the confidence of Berlin, prompting his replacement by Theodor Leutwein in 1893. Leutwein stayed as governor until 1904, when he was forced to resign his post because of the Herero rebellion. Leutwein was keen to establish a sovereign state in GSWA, which could promote both German immigration and economic interests.⁵⁶⁶ As he assumed his new position in a state of war, however, his first move was to assure the absolute security of GSWA so that he could build up the state structures he wished for. First, he subjugated lesser Nama clans through force to accept German authority, before moving on to subjugate Witbooi who was still in open rebellion in the southern parts of GSWA. After much heavy fighting where the Germans' superior weaponry proved decisive, Witbooi was forced to surrender and submit to a protection treaty, as the Herero had done. Leutwein, however, had changed the wording of the treaty so that Witbooi was not to accept German 'protection', but German 'suzerainty'.⁵⁶⁷

In effect, the Nama were now subjects in a colony annexed by the German Reich which was part of Leutwein's scheme of state-building. This was followed by several reforms where GSWA was divided into districts and the establishment of elective councils in 1899, consisting of German settlers – a move very similar to the establishment of a comparable council in Southern Rhodesia that same year.⁵⁶⁸ Nevertheless, the European population of GSWA continued to be minuscule; in 1896, for instance, it was a mere 2,000, and although it had increased to 4,682 in 1903, the German presence remained marginal.⁵⁶⁹ At this time, Windhoek remained the main centre of population, but since the size of the colony was so vast, the few settlers there were, were spread out over immense distances. Therefore, the systematic division of administrative bodies through elected councils served not only to satisfy settler demands but also to accommodate Leutwein in his state-building enterprise.

Yet, as GSWA covered an area as large as 835,100 square kilometres – one and half times the size of Germany – the enforcement of a state authority was not straightforward. As Dederling has noted, the attempts to subjugate the indigenous peoples were 'impeded by financial restrictions and German ignorance of the political and historical realities of

⁵⁶⁶ Helmut Bley, *Namibia under German Rule*, 7.

⁵⁶⁷ Drechsler, *Let us Die Fighting*, 77.

⁵⁶⁸ Palmer, 'Colonial Genocides', 229.

⁵⁶⁹ Bley, *Namibia under German Rule*, 73. Also Goldblatt, *History of South-West Africa*, 200.

Namibia.’ Thus, it was not until 1894 that Leutwein could consolidate his power through central and parts of southern Namibia, where for instance Windhoek is situated, through treaties of protection.⁵⁷⁰ Windhoek was important for the Germans, as it controlled the plains best suited for cattle herding in the country, and therefore it was coveted by the German settlers and administration and interlocked them in a struggle with the Herero over the control of this fertile land, which was a key reason for the outbreak of war in 1904.⁵⁷¹ According to the White Book, the rinderpest decimated the Herero stock of cattle to less than 5% of its original size.⁵⁷² This estimate is confirmed by other independent studies of the rinderpest, which similarly point to the cataclysmic spread and effects of the epidemic.⁵⁷³ Although it cannot be explored in depth here, one may assume that the spread of rinderpest which disrupted socio-economic foundations throughout Southern Africa, was a significant factor in causing uprisings. Indeed, just as had happened in Southern Rhodesia, the rinderpest in GSWA had severe consequences. It compelled the Herero to gradually sell off their land to German settlers, who protected their cattle from the rinderpest more efficiently. Therefore, the rinderpest created a vacuum which the German settlers could fill, thus spreading German colonial administration and rule, particularly to the regions which had hitherto been within the Herero sphere of control.

Perhaps swayed by the gradual expropriation of the Herero grazing lands at Windhoek, Leutwein was convinced that the indigenous peoples of GSWA would gradually (almost automatically) yield to the German presence and state-building. However, the outbreak of hostilities in 1904 witnessed that the Herero, and later the Nama, were not willing to submit to the Germans without resistance.⁵⁷⁴ Until 1904, Leutwein and arguably most German colonial officials were convinced of the stability of GSWA. Thus, the perception of the Herero and Nama having accepted, and ultimately subjected themselves to German rule therefore functioned as a self-imposed smokescreen which concealed the weakness of colonial rule. Leutwein’s treaties of protection combined with the destructive effects of the rinderpest had thus created an illusion of a strong state which had convinced Leutwein himself, Berlin and perhaps even the settlers of its importance and hegemony. But this was far from the reality as the Herero and Nama had only accepted the German presence on

⁵⁷⁰ Dederling, ‘War and Mobility’, 277.

⁵⁷¹ Bethencourt, *Racisms*, 349.

⁵⁷² BL 08157.f.8, Deutsche Reichskolonialamt, *The Treatment of Native*, 43.

⁵⁷³ Daniel Gilfoyle, ‘Veterinary Research and the African Rinderpest Epizootic: The Cape Colony 1896-1898’, *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 29, 1 (2003), 136. Also Pule Phoofolo, ‘Epidemics and Revolutions: The Rinderpest Epidemics in Late nineteenth-Century Southern Africa’, *Past & Present*, 138, 1 (1993), 126.

⁵⁷⁴ Jürgen Zimmerer, ‘War, Concentration Camps and Genocide in South-West Africa’ in Zimmerer and Zeller (eds.), *Genocide in German South-West Africa*, 44.

paper, but in reality, being against their presence and angered by the encroachment and mistreatment, they soon revealed the weakness of the German colonial state.

The outbreak of war in 1904 therefore profoundly influenced colonial policy pertaining to GSWA. In fact, after the main fighting had been quelled, the so-called Native Regulations of 1906 were introduced and revealed a drastic change in the perception of how colonial policy, in GSWA was to be enforced. Unlike the former policy, in which the underpinning belief was subtle and, to an extent, even voluntarily subjection by the indigenous peoples, the regulations of 1906 were symptomatic of a more ruthless policy. These new regulations came out of a 'fear of a bad peace' in which the settlers demanded a much harsher governing of the indigenous subjects. Soon, all 'tribal property', whether fully or partly involved in the war, was confiscated by the German authorities.⁵⁷⁵ Before then, longstanding plans for reserves, in which the sustainability of the inhabitants was legally ensured in ways much similar to agreements in Southern Rhodesia, were abolished, and instead the Kaiser signed an expropriation order in 1905. This order meant, that all tribal lands, including 'the entire movable and fixed property of the tribe' – in other words, livestock and land upon which the subsistence of the indigenous peoples depended – were to be taken by the Germans.⁵⁷⁶ Although the Reichstag had a resolution passed in which it demanded that the Herero had sufficient land and resources for their subsistence, this was ignored by the *Reichskolonialamt*.⁵⁷⁷ Yet expropriation was only one aspect of the future plans for GSWA. According to Helmut Bley, the Native Regulations was an attempt 'to create an unbroken network of oppressive controls'.⁵⁷⁸ The division between settlers and indigenous peoples, therefore, became embedded in legal discrimination because only by obtaining a permit from the Governor could the Herero and the Nama now acquire land. These legislative changes should be seen in the context of the war and the racial beliefs in Germany. As Jürgen Zimmerer has contended, the utopian beliefs of the state in GSWA mainly derived from racial conceptualisations and were deeply influential in the 'native policies'. Therefore, the war in 1904-8 changed the social structures in GSWA, which necessitated a new policy that attempted to completely subjugate, if not almost eradicate, the indigenous peoples.⁵⁷⁹

⁵⁷⁵ Drechsler, *Let us Die Fighting*, 215.

⁵⁷⁶ Bley, *Namibia under German Rule*, 171.

⁵⁷⁷ Drechsler, *Let us Die Fighting*, 216.

⁵⁷⁸ Bley, *Namibia under German Rule*, 172.

⁵⁷⁹ Jürgen Zimmerer, *Deutsche Herrschaft über Afrikaner. Staatlicher Machtanspruch und Wirklichkeit im kolonialen Namibia* (Münster, 2004), 92-93.

Anglo-German Economic and Geopolitical Entanglement

As discussed earlier, Southern Rhodesia was believed to be the home of King Solomon's legendary mines. Similarly, in GSWA, prospectors were soon drooling at the thought of stumbling upon gold and diamonds in the deserts of GSWA. The discovery of gold in Witwatersrand in the Transvaal in 1886 sparked many gold rushes across the globe. Southern Rhodesia remains such an example, and the same can be said of Klondike in the Yukon Territory of Canada. Both were, at the time, on the brink of 'civilisation': Southern Rhodesia was unclaimed by any Europeans and was home to a martial race; the Ndebele. Therefore, the very idea of discovering minerals in the most inhospitable places on the earth persisted. It would be wrong to suggest that GSWA saw a major gold rush, but nonetheless, it claimed the attention of hopefuls.

Frederick Lüderitz was one such hopeful who had hoped to stumble upon gold and diamonds in Namibia. However, due to continuous financial hardships – in part brought about by the inexistence of such minerals – Lüderitz's venture was taken over by the *Deutsche Kolonial Gesellschaft für Südwest Afrika* (The German Colonial Company of Southwest Africa), which was established by a German consortium in 1884. Bismarck had hoped to grant them a charter to transfer the colonial administration to a private enterprise, but due to its financial incapability, the *Gesellschaft* continuously rejected this. According to Richard Voeltz, it was 'too underfinanced and too undermanned to administer or commercially exploit the territory of South West Africa.'⁵⁸⁰

One of the economic interests in GSWA from early on was the potential mineral wealth. This was also evident in the protection treaties where the transfer of land from local authorities to Europeans was to be approved by the German government. However, in 1888 the Herero granted a Cape trader and associate of Cecil Rhodes, Robert Lewis, a mining concession to the potentially rich copper deposits in the Otavi region.⁵⁸¹ This directly violated the protection treaty which the Herero had signed with the Germans and gave Britain the chance to press for further claims in the region. According to Voeltz, this was the reason why Bismarck decided to send von François to GSWA and establish a firm colonial administration instead of working for the establishment of a colony under the rule of a chartered company. From the perspective of Cape officials, this was a potential chance to seize SWA, which they believed to be part of their domain in all but formality. Indeed, Cape officials, including Rhodes, had been left disappointed by the lack of interest from London

⁵⁸⁰ Voeltz, *German Colonialism*, 2.

⁵⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 3.

in acquiring SWA, and some even felt deceived by the British government.⁵⁸² In fact, the Cape Administration had from the 1870s sent numerous special commissions led by William Palgrave to Herero and Namaqualand to obtain indigenous support for South African sovereignty, only to be left disappointed by the formal German takeover in 1884.⁵⁸³

The economy of GSWA was indisputably entangled with the Cape Colony and therefore also with the British imperial economy. Therefore, frictions regarding the borders in Southern Africa between Britain and Germany continued as a pressing matter. In the case of GSWA, two territories were disputed; Walvis Bay and nearby Damaraland.

According to an 1887 Blue Book on Walvis Bay, there was little rain in this area and few possibilities for cultivation, and it was far from being an asset to the British Empire. Indeed, in 1886, the total revenue was £20,416, while its expenditure was £29,775.⁵⁸⁴ Therefore 'Walvis Bay may continue to be held up for reasons of state, but from every other point of view it must always be the most unpromising and unprofitable of our colonial possessions.' It may therefore appear peculiar that this desolate and expensive enclave was at the centrepiece of Anglo-German relations in Southern Africa. Britain, it seems, was keen to keep it despite it being so unpromising, for the mere purpose of not allowing their rival to have it. The importance of Walvis Bay was not only commercial, it was also geopolitical because it was the only deep-water harbour on the entire Namibian coastline. This not only meant, that significant portions of overseas trade went through British territory, but also meant that troop deployment from Germany was limited.⁵⁸⁵ Indicatively, in 1904, only days after the Herero rebellion broke out, plans to expand the harbour at Swakopmund were drawn up, as the continuous German pressure on Britain to either sell, hand over or trade the enclave were consistently rejected.⁵⁸⁶

In the case of Damaraland, this was another mix of geopolitical and economic issues: Rhodes himself had wanted it annexed by the Cape as an extension from Walvis Bay, not only for its possible mineral wealth but also for geopolitical reasons. The ongoing failure of the *Gesellschaft* and the full implementation of German administration in GSWA caused sporadic unrests by the indigenous peoples, which the Cape authorities feared would cause

⁵⁸² SHL: DT 706 GOV: *Government of South Africa*, 29

⁵⁸³ For the Palgrave Commissions see E.P Stals, *The Commissions of W.C Palgrave – Special Commissioner to South West Africa, 1876-1885* (Cape Town, 1991).

⁵⁸⁴ BAB: R 1001/2079: Emile S. Rolland. Royal Magistrate, Bluebook 1887, 103.

⁵⁸⁵ Ibid., 100.

⁵⁸⁶ BAB: R 1001/2111: Telegram by Adolph Woermann to Aus. Amt, 21 January 1904 and BAB: R 1001/2116: Abschrift von Kommando der Marine-Station der Ostsee: Denkschrift des Oberst Dürr, enclosed in Kriegsministerium to Herrn Reichskansler, 4 September 1904, 56-57.

problems in their own territory.⁵⁸⁷ Nevertheless, the frictions over territory stemming from financial uncertainty and weakness of colonial rule in GSWA led to discussions about an envisioned Anglo-German company in Damaraland.⁵⁸⁸ While the company as originally intended did not end up being as transnational as it was supposed to be, it was nonetheless established and entangled British and German financial interests in the region. In the end, the consequence of Lewis' influence on the Herero, which led to his concession to the Otavi mines, eventually caused the establishment of the South West Africa Company in 1893. Clearly, there were firm financial interests at the heart of Anglo-German relations concerning GSWA as the South West African Company was partially owned by many South African and British investors. As such, speculations regarding mineral wealth and the potential discovery of diamonds and mines were taken over by Britain, causing GSWA to be a German colony in principle, but perhaps a de facto British colony – at least in terms of financial matters.

Nevertheless, the company continued to be a failure and consequently Anglo-German co-operation through the company was already drawing to a close by 1894.⁵⁸⁹ While this chapter does not seek to address the financial aspects of imperialism, it is nonetheless a factor worth mentioning, as it was undoubtedly key to many of the developments and policies adopted in the region. Furthermore, it might have been in consideration by British officials when the 1904 rebellion broke out. GSWA's dependency on the British possessions is crucial in ascertaining how the Herero rebellion and subsequent genocide was not only perceived by British – and for that matter, German – officials, but it is also important in understanding how and why they acted as they did. Indeed, as will be shown throughout this case study, Britain had stakes in GSWA: not only economical but also ideological, political and in terms of 'native administration', not to mention security issues.

German Colonial Policies and Ambitions and the British Neighbour

Anglo-German entanglement in Southern Africa was not only evident in purely commercial and geopolitical matters, but also in colonial policies and ambitions. Indeed, the initial hype in Germany over the acquisition of colonies was based on the assumption that the Empire had made Britain a great power.⁵⁹⁰ The idea of a German India or German Africa was significantly tempting in German popular opinion. It was therefore natural that Germany, as

⁵⁸⁷ Voeltz, *German Colonialism*, 8.

⁵⁸⁸ Ibid., 13-14.

⁵⁸⁹ Ibid., *German Colonialism*, 18.

⁵⁹⁰ Zimmerer, *Deutsche Herrschaft über Afrikaner*. 15.

a newcomer to the colonial stage, looked to Britain for inspiration.⁵⁹¹ Indicatively, legislation regarding the administration and distribution of power in GSWA was often inspired by the British policies in the region.

In particular, the German Colonial Society has presented specific proposals in a petition to the Reichskansler which advocates for the introduction of an advisory board such as the legislative councils in English colonies but with certain limitations.⁵⁹²

Inspired by the British Empire, the *Deutsche Kolonialgesellschaft* (German Colonial Society, GCS) advocated for the distribution of power in the colonies to be more favourable to the local authorities. Settlers and local officials should have more influence and authority but would remain loyal to the Kaiser, just as the settler colonies of Australia, Canada and to an extent, South Africa, remained loyal.⁵⁹³ In other words, the GCS supported the eventual establishment of a self-governing colony with a responsible government in GSWA. The overall ambition of the German colonial project was, among others, driven by the ideology of *Lebensraum* coined by Philip Ratzel in 1896, which has long been considered equivalent to Hitler's eastern ambitions, but was indeed part of a wider *raison d'être* behind the colonial project that included immigration and the establishment of settler colonies.⁵⁹⁴

However, the German government was reluctant to give the settlers too much influence, particularly because GSWA was home to many non-Germans, as will be discussed below. At the close of 1904, the GCS suggested that the German settlers should have the opportunity to be in the *Gouvernementsrat* (Government Council) but that certain conditions were to be met first. These included having resided in GSWA for several years and, more importantly, being able to prove that one had had proper relations with the indigenous peoples.⁵⁹⁵ This move was intended to build on Leutwein's establishment of an elective council in 1899. However, this indicates an internal schism between the imperial centre and the colonial periphery. The settlers and traders in GSWA wanted a greater deal of autonomy and were supported by the GCS. But the German government was unwilling to surrender complete control, possibly because they feared that it would sway towards being under either British or Boer control. Indeed, just as there had been an *uitlander* crisis in the Transvaal up to the outbreak of the South African War, similar tendencies were evident in GSWA up to

⁵⁹¹ Lindner, 'Encounters over the Border', 47.

⁵⁹² BAB: R 1001/2173: Direktor der Kolonial Abt., Oscar Stuebel, Denkschrift, 27 October 1903, 7-8.

⁵⁹³ Ibid., 8.

⁵⁹⁴ Conrad, *German Colonialism*, 156.

⁵⁹⁵ BAB: R 1001/2173: Deutsche Kolonial Gesellschaft to Auswärtiges Amt, Kolonial Abt., 27 December 1904.

and during the Herero-Nama rebellion in 1904, which, as will be shown, was the pretext for Germany to impose clearer and more authoritative control over a colony over which they had hitherto only been in control on paper.

Comparing British and German methods of colonial rule was prevalent among German officials and scholars. For instance, Dr Georg Hartmann, geographer and director for the Otavi Mining and Railway Company, published a pamphlet titled *Die Zukunft Deutsch-Südwestafrika, Beitrag zur Besiedlungs- und Eingeborenenfrage* (The Future of GSWA. Thoughts on the settler and native questions). While this is not an official source, it was nonetheless kept by the *Reichskolonialamt* among its reports and correspondence and considering the obscurity of the *Reichskolonialamt* compared to its British equivalent, it is plausible that it was perhaps more easily swayed by pressure from intellectual groups and social scientists: i.e., supposed experts on colonialism.⁵⁹⁶

According to Hartmann, the early stages of colonisation in GSWA were, as mentioned, troublesome and expensive, and saw little fruition of the ambitions of merchants and speculators compared to other subtropical colonies such as those in South America, South Africa and Australia. Indeed, he argued that these had all been through *Entwicklungsphasen* (phases of development), which were gruesome years, but in the long term would establish a colony of 'substantial benefit for the Motherland.'⁵⁹⁷ Hartmann also contended that a colony with settler administration would stay loyal to the Kaiser, but only if it was a colony with the same 'flesh and blood as the Motherland.'⁵⁹⁸ This correlates to the German ideal of *Heimat*: a concept of 'home'. GSWA was to become a new *Heimat*: a German overseas state, similar to, for instance, Bavaria or Saxony albeit in Africa. In order to become this, Hartmann argued, it was necessary to create a peasantry which would render the colony able to support itself, and, when minerals were found, as he was convinced they would be, it was important to form a 'mining population.'⁵⁹⁹

The economic sustainability of GSWA was then pivotal in the ambitions for the success of the colony, whether from the perspective of the settlers, government or indeed intellectuals. While Hartmann did not explicitly define who the mining population was, it can plausibly be surmised that this role was earmarked for the indigenous peoples, because, for

⁵⁹⁶ Paul Rohrbach is often promoted as an exemplary intellectual who influenced colonial policies. See Erichsen and Olusoga, *Kaiser's Holocaust*, 111-13.

⁵⁹⁷ BAB: R 1001/2084: Dr. Georg Hartmann, *Die Zukunft Deutsch-Südwestafrika, Beitrag zur Besiedlungs- und Eingeborenenfrage*, 1904, 6-7.

⁵⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 10.

⁵⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 10.

the colony to develop economically, ‘it is necessary to rapidly change the land in favour of the whites.’ But it was still the German government’s responsibility to bring ‘peace and order to the land’ where the ‘white traders have plundered and killed.’⁶⁰⁰ In Hartmann’s view, the Africans did not pose an obstacle to the creation of such a state, but their treatment by settlers could potentially cause strife and turmoil and thereby disrupt the development of the colony. Similar patterns were seen in Southern Rhodesia, where the *perceived* mineral wealth also dictated ‘native policy’ and may thus suggest a correlation between these two, or perhaps even – although no sources indicate this – that Hartmann and others were indeed looking to colonial policy in British colonies such as Southern Rhodesia, where again a ‘mining population’ was considered imperative for the sustainability of the colony.

Hartmann contended that the main threat to the creation of a German *Heimat* was the British neighbour with its ‘protectionist aspirations’, and because GSWA was dependable upon imports from the Cape, he sought to have it ‘emancipated from Great Britain.’⁶⁰¹ GSWA was dependent on British and especially South African imports, particularly of wool and foodstuffs. For instance, German shipments to and from GSWA went through British territory, and various private enterprises, such as Covey & Co., made a business on Anglo-German trade agreements between the Cape, Walvis Bay and into GSWA.⁶⁰² Clearly, the Cape was key to the success of GSWA as a colony, and both Germany and Britain were aware of this.

According to the Badisches Foreign Ministry (the German State of Baden-Baden), British and Boer land was most fertile in the Transvaal, the Cape and Southern Rhodesia, but they considered GSWA ‘as the best farmland for cattle.’⁶⁰³ Furthermore, due to the accelerating growth in population, and consequentially emigration, GSWA seemed promising to either lure settlers to a German outpost or, alternatively, to break the supposed forthcoming crisis of a Malthusian trap:

When a satisfactory form of Government has been adopted, the German territory, with its millions of uncultivated acres grasping for water and the plough, its pastoral resources and mining possibilities, may rightly be looked upon as an outlet for surplus population.⁶⁰⁴

⁶⁰⁰ Ibid., 17.

⁶⁰¹ Ibid., 31.

⁶⁰² BAB: R 1001/1945: Imperial German General Konsulat für Britisch Süd Afrika to Reichskanzler Bülow, 5 December 1906. Also, BAB: R 1001/2112: Covey & Co to the Consul General for Germany, Cape Town, 9 February 1904.

⁶⁰³ BAB: R 1001/2084: Badisches Ministerium des Grossherzoglichen Hauses und der auswärtiges Angelegenheiten to Aus. Amt. Kolonial Abt. 31 January 1905.

⁶⁰⁴ TNA: FO 64/1645: Article by Baron von Nettelbladt in *The South African News*, 31 May 1904, enclosed in Hutchinson to Lyttelton, 1 June 1904.

Such ideals were only reinforced with the outbreak of war, which was believed to facilitate the introduction of legislative measures to ensure these. Indeed, Hartmann argued that confiscating the indigenous peoples' lands and making them labourers would not only be welcomed by the settlers but would also see more settlers immigrate to GSWA.⁶⁰⁵

In many ways, the aforementioned Native Regulations of 1906 were the envisagement of such colonial ideals or at least the attempt thereof. They were a means of social control over the indigenous peoples of GSWA and an attempt to realise a colonial project and to create the long-desired settler colony based on the total subjugation of the Herero and Nama into serfdom in order to improve the colony. Much of this was rooted in racial thoughts predominant in Germany, which were particularly evident in the new marriage laws that were enforced. As anywhere else in Africa, there had been cases where Germans had taken African wives. This 'race-mixing' was at the crux of a socio-political issue regarding Germany's colonial ambitions and intentions. According to German law, children of a German father would inherit his citizenship, and therefore, there would, on paper, be mixed-race Germans. For societies such as the *Gesellschaft für Rassenhygiene* (Society for Racial Hygiene), this was unacceptable and was deemed the undoing of the German colonial project, as it prevented the creation of a *Heimat* in GSWA as well as 'polluting' the German race.⁶⁰⁶ For those settlers who had taken African wives (and sometimes husbands), the new marriage laws meant that they would also be demoted to the same legal status as an African. In other words, they would lose their judicial rights and relations to Germany. This was a crucial aspect in which Britain became directly involved due to the many British subjects residing within GSWA. Because of these laws, many British subjects were now disenfranchised and were – legalistically – perceived as 'natives'. The British authorities in Africa and London, therefore, had to react in order to safeguard the legal status of their subjects, communicating with the *Auswärtiges Amt* on the matter.⁶⁰⁷ The mixed-race marriage issue is therefore an example in which the entanglement as well as the discourses underpinning German colonial legislations and beliefs were transformed into practice for a significant number of British subjects who resided in German territory and were therefore subject to German law. In 1907 the Windhoek Court nullified all existing marriages between whites and Africans. Pertaining to the inheritance of German citizenship from father to son, it decided that 'once a bloodline had been contaminated with black blood, nothing could

⁶⁰⁵ BAB: R 1001/2084: Dr. Georg Hartmann, Die Die Zukunft Deutsch-Südwestafrika, Beitrag zur Besiedlungs- und Eingeborenenfrage, 1904, 14-15.

⁶⁰⁶ Zimmerman, *Anthropology and Antihumanism*, 241.

⁶⁰⁷ Lindner, *Koloniale Begegnungen*, 260-61.

change the status of subsequent generations.’ Thus, mixed-race children with German fathers were without citizenship.⁶⁰⁸

Scientific racialism in Germany was influential on colonial policies and practices. For instance, views on how race-mixing would degenerate the purity of the German race, directly translated into legislation in GSWA.⁶⁰⁹ The German preoccupation with race in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century was a belief in ‘assumed superiority which made possible a treatment of native peoples then almost unthinkable within Europe itself.’⁶¹⁰ As later argued by Aimé Césaire, such unthinkable treatment supposedly transferred back to Europe in the shape of the Holocaust.⁶¹¹ Césaire’s logic has arguably been replicated in the *Sonderweg* literature, where the Holocaust is the logical heir to the Herero-Nama genocide. However, this obscures contextual similarities to, for instance, South Africa, and instead promotes a perspective derived from hindsight. In terms of legislation, the development of apartheid and segregation in South Africa may appear as a more historically suitable comparison. Here Africans were equally subjected to an increasingly racist rhetoric and legislations that determined and confined them to a socio-economic status based on their race.⁶¹²

Entanglements such as the British settlers in GSWA have long been unnoticed due to the overshadowing emphasis on Anglo-German antagonism prior to 1914. Therefore, the context of British actions and perceptions of German colonial rule in GSWA are part of a wider historiographical tendency of diplomatic and international history. In 1890, Britain and Germany signed the Zanzibar-Heligoland treaty, signalling an Anglo-German alliance, or at least, friendship. However, due to the developments between Britain and France from the Fashoda crisis in 1898 and later the Entente Cordiale in 1904, Germany was gradually deterred by the British at the same time as the Germans started building up a fleet – antagonising the British due to their navalism and ‘ruling the waves’.⁶¹³ It is conventionally believed that when Britain opted to support France over the Moroccan question at the Algeiras Conference in 1906, the lines were drawn and the Anglo-French alliance was solidified.⁶¹⁴ Thus, from a traditional view, Anglo-German relations at the time would suggest

⁶⁰⁸ Olusoga and Erichsen, *Kaiser’s Holocaust*, 243.

⁶⁰⁹ See, for instance, Olusoga and Erichsen, *Kaiser’s Holocaust*, 95-98 and Lindner, *Koloniale Begegnungen*, ch. 4.

⁶¹⁰ Quotation by David Blackbourne, cited in Erichsen, *Angel of Death*, 84.

⁶¹¹ See Aimé Césaire, *Discourse*.

⁶¹² Bethencourt, *Racisms*, 350.

⁶¹³ See, for instance, Lisle A. Rose, *The Age of Navalism, 1890-1918* (Columbia MO, 2007).

⁶¹⁴ S.L. Mayer, ‘Anglo-German Rivalry at the Algeiras Conference’ in Gifford and Louis (eds.), *Britain and Germany in Africa*, 215-16.

that Britain's stance during the Herero-Nama war and genocide was part of a growing tendency towards antagonism. This is in no way an incorrect position: just as there was much entanglement and dependency, so also was there a tendencies of antagonism and rivalry, not only on a wider national and international basis but also in smaller internal and personal circumstances. For instance, the Badisches foreign ministry continued its lengthy telegram by discussing how the British mockery of German colonialism as oppressive and despotic was wrong. It was Britain that was pursuing the wrong policy, as it was not as free as it claimed but was subdued by the 'slavery of taxation and tariffs' while Germany was merely emphasising order.⁶¹⁵ However, the problem with the dependency upon Britain was not, it was argued, due to the ideological antagonism, but because so many German settlers and indigenous people traded across the border where the facilities and market supply were better, causing the Reich to 'annually lose hundreds of thousands of Mark.'⁶¹⁶

The British neighbour was therefore not merely problematic because of GSWA's dependency thereon, but also because it prevented the internal economy from developing and thus becoming a *Heimat*. Furthermore, the lack of German settlers in GSWA continued to be a problem at a time when millions of immigrants were leaving Germany for America. In order to divert some of these settlers to remain within German territory, GSWA was branded as a potential location.⁶¹⁷ Yet it remained difficult to attract settlers to GSWA, and the outbreak of the Herero rebellion in 1904 only made matters worse. In response, German authorities tried to lure settlers to GSWA by granting them 15,000 Mark for settling there.⁶¹⁸

Immigrants from Germany were not only thought to be important for the economic development of GSWA but were also an attempt to minimise non-German influence. According to Dederling, in 1902, out of a total of 4,635 white settlers, there were 1,455 Boers and 452 British in GSWA, and in June that same year, a further 400 Boer emigrants arrived.⁶¹⁹ Robbie Aitken, however, contends that the number of Boer settlers in GSWA was somewhat lower, but in 1902 it comprised at least a quarter of the total settler population.⁶²⁰ Despite such diverse estimations, both Dederling and Aitken agree that the quantity of non-German settlers in GSWA was substantial, and while several German governors such as Göring and

⁶¹⁵ BAB: R 1001/2084: Badisches Ministerium des Grossherzoglichen Hauses und der auswärtiges Angelegenheiten to Auswärtiges Amt, Kolonial Abt. 31 January 1905.

⁶¹⁶ Ibid.

⁶¹⁷ See, for instance, Paul Rohrbach, *Der Deutsche Gedanke in der Welt* (Leipzig, 1912), 132.

⁶¹⁸ BAB: R 1001/2116: Abschrifte von Kommando der Marine-Station der Ostsee: Denkschrift des Oberst Dürr, enclosed in Kriegsministerium to Herrn Reichskansler, 4 September 1904, 60.

⁶¹⁹ Tilman Dederling, 'The Ferreira Raid of 1906: Boers, Britons and Germans in Southern Africa in the Aftermath of the South African War', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 26, 1 (2000), 51.

⁶²⁰ Robbie Aitken, 'Looking for "Die Besten Boeren": The Normalisation of Afrikaner Settlement in German South West Africa, 1884-1914', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 33, 2 (2007), 349.

Leutwein had considered Boer immigration beneficial, officials in Berlin considered it problematic, as it undermined the German character of SWA.⁶²¹ Thus, German officials feared that the colony would lose its ties to the motherland, particularly as the many Boer settlers continued to refuse to integrate into the German settler society.⁶²²

Due to the large quantity of non-German settlers, GSWA cannot be considered a disconnected colony in the sense that it was a kind of extension of the German nation. Nevertheless, it was a crucial part of the German colonial project. Helmut Bley has noted that there was not a political confrontation between the settlers and the authorities before the outbreak of the Herero rebellion.⁶²³ Therefore, in order to fully comprehend German practices and policies employed in GSWA to quell the Herero and later Nama rebels, it is important to note the internal relations between centre and periphery, complicated by the overshadowing presence of the British neighbour. Indeed, the growing demands of the settlers, in which the rebellion served as a catalyst, may explain not only how German officials acted and legislated during the rebellion, but also how British policy vis-à-vis Southern Africa as a whole developed during those years. The presence of British and particularly Boer settlers in GSWA remained an ongoing issue which forced the hand of officials to make cross-border policies. Furthermore, the belief among Cape officials, particularly considering the economic dependence and entanglement manifested in the Anglo-German Company in Damaraland, was that GSWA was to be annexed and was ostensibly part of South Africa in all but formality and name.⁶²⁴ The pressures from the settlers and the decisions of the officials, whether in Berlin or Windhoek, were therefore shaped by the British shadow standing over GSWA. Where Whitehall had initially found the territory unimportant, for Cape Authorities, British supremacy in the region did indeed include South West Africa.⁶²⁵

Britain's entanglement in German colonial ambitions and policies, therefore, was influential, both directly and indirectly in a practical and theoretical way respectively. Practical as the Cape and British settlers in GSWA posed a rational deductible threat to the establishment of a *Heimat*. This was reinforced by the dependence on the Cape in terms of, among others, economy and communications, leaving GSWA, to an extent, isolated from Germany and more within the sphere of influence of the Cape and London. Indeed, after 1902, GSWA was, in a way, the new Transvaal in the region: the missing piece in the creation of a South

⁶²¹ Ibid., 346.

⁶²² Dederling, 'The Ferreira Raid', 51.

⁶²³ Bley, *Namibia under German Rule*, 74.

⁶²⁴ Dreyer, *Mind of Official Imperialism*, 93-97; 118-19.

⁶²⁵ Ibid., 228.

African hegemony. Theoretically, as the British Empire functioned as both inspiration and deterrence, Britain's mastery over such vast and various colonies was a system to copy – especially in the settler colonies, where Germany hoped to create a white colony in GSWA. This, in turn, meant that the place of the indigenous peoples was crucial; in order to create a white settler colony as Australia or Canada, these peoples were to be exterminated, removed or completely subjugated. Indeed, the main difference between Britain's white dominions of Australia and Canada and that of South Africa was not only the presence of the Boers but also the continued existence of a significant indigenous population. Therefore, the war in 1904 was a way for Germany to impose further colonial ideals, taking drastic steps towards the establishment of a *Heimat* via the extermination or complete subjugation of the indigenous peoples.

Total War in Africa: Outbreak of the Rebellion

Before the outbreak of the Herero rebellion, Leutwein had taken his troops south to quell the Bondelswarts, who had risen on 25 October 1903, and the rebellion here was not over until 27 January 1904 – several days after the outbreak of the Herero rebellion. The Bondelswarts were a Nama clan residing in the area named Warmbad, close to the South African border. The German presence in Warmbad prior to the rebellion in 1903 was under the leadership of Lt. Jobst, who had served in China after the Boxer Rebellion (1899-1901). According to Erichsen and Olusoga, Jobst violated the protection treaty between the Germans and the Bondelswart chief, Jan Christian, by summoning him to Warmbad over a dispute with a Herero woman regarding the ownership of a goat. When Christian refused, as Jobst did not have this authority, Jobst gathered the few men he had and shot Christian. In response, Jobst and his men were shot by the Bondelswarts, thus starting the war.⁶²⁶

Leutwein had condemned the behaviour of Jobst, and in general, he was aiming to avoid war with the indigenous peoples, especially the Herero.⁶²⁷ However, swift reactions and demands for revenge soon forced Leutwein to go south on a 500 mile long journey through rugged and dry terrain to quell the Bondelswarts, leaving Windhoek and Hereroland exposed.⁶²⁸ When the Herero rose in rebellion, Leutwein quickly concluded a fragile peace

⁶²⁶ Olusoga and Erichsen, *Kaiser's Holocaust*, 121.

⁶²⁷ Bley, *Namibia under German Rule*, 117.

⁶²⁸ Olusoga and Erichsen, *Kaiser's Holocaust*, 122.

with the Bondelswarts and rushed north.⁶²⁹ While Leutwein was away, the young and rather belligerent Lt. Zürn was in command in the town of Okahandja. Zürn was known for his contempt of the Herero and after he had committed a series of abuses, rumours and anxiety started to spread that the Herero were out for revenge.⁶³⁰ However, many Herero in German employ continued to spread rumours that certain chiefs and captains had declared that they wished to oust the Germans from their lands.⁶³¹ Such rumours were taken seriously by Zürn and the settlers in Okahandja, and soon two officials volunteered to go out and investigate whether there was any truth in them.⁶³² In response to these continuous rumours, Zürn requested that a machine gun be sent from Windhoek in a move similar to that of the British in Southern Rhodesia, who found the mere presence of such a weapon to be of great use.⁶³³ It was believed that it could deter any Herero attacks by its mere presence and thus gave the settlers a sense of security when the situation looked dire.

Nevertheless, conflict seemed unavoidable, as indicated by *Bezirksamtman*n [District Officer] Gustav Duft, who informed Berlin:

Peaceful negotiations useless, great slaughter of Germans by the Herero. 100 settlers believed murdered and all of their property and survivors taken. Okahandja reinforced by Zülw today. Waiting for sailor rescue corps from Windhoek which has been repulsed twice. Connections to Windhoek completely destroyed. Operations in Windhoek, Gobabis, Omaruru unknown. Great force and weapons needed for suppression, otherwise peace will be impossible for indefinite time.⁶³⁴

The rebellion had thus started and soon settlers were killed by the rebels – many in their sleep by their servants. The Zülw mentioned in Duft's telegram was an officer dispatched to oversee the defences of Okahandja. Upon his arrival, he proclaimed to the Herero that due to the might of the German Reich, he advised them to surrender and promised that if they kept the peace, they would not 'be so severely punished that if you continue murdering and continue fighting. And we Germans will win.'⁶³⁵ Despite his initial confidence, Zülw's position in Okahandja was fragile: most troops were with Leutwein in the south and they were vastly outnumbered. Therefore, he attempted to frighten the Herero with Germany's domestic strength that could be unleashed abroad. Zülw made this proclamation knowing

⁶²⁹ Goldblatt, *History of South-West Africa*, 129.

⁶³⁰ Olusoga and Erichsen, *Kaiser's Holocaust*, 124.

⁶³¹ BAB: R 1001/2112: Telegram from gez. Rauscher to Das Kaiserliches Distriktskommando Gobabis, 9 January 1904.

⁶³² Olusoga and Erichsen, *Kaiser's Holocaust*, 125.

⁶³³ BAB: R 1001/2112: Tagesbericht des Bezirksamtman Gustav Duft über die Vorgänge beim Aufstande der Hereros im Distrikt Okahandja, 17 January 1904.

⁶³⁴ BAB: R 1001/2112: Duft to Auswärtiges Amt, enclosed in Tagesbericht des Bezirksamtman Duft über die Vorgänge beim Aufstande der Hereros im Distrikt Okahandja., 17 January 1904.

⁶³⁵ BAB: R 1001/2113: Bericht, Oberleutnant von Zülw, 19 January 1904.

that reinforcements were already on their way, and four days after the rebellion had started, Friedrich von Lindequist, the German Consul to South Africa and later Governor of GSWA, reported that the war with the Bondelswarts was about to be concluded and that he had made communications with Berlin to send available ships and reinforcements to GSWA. The next day, Berlin confirmed that it would send 500 men to GSWA in order to quell the rebellion – a message ‘received with great joy.’⁶³⁶

The outbreak of the war also led to new legislation pertaining to any Herero in the employ of various companies. It was forbidden for ‘natives to stay out of their accommodation between 8 pm until 6 am without written authorisation.’ Furthermore, no more than thirty Africans were to work together in groups and these should be under guard.⁶³⁷ The same decree stated that the police were also empowered ‘to make use of their firearms against the natives in cases of assault against themselves and others, resistance in open violence with weapons or dangerous tools, against them or others.’ Lastly, they were also allowed to shoot them should they attempt to escape.⁶³⁸ If they did not attempt to escape, but otherwise broke this decree, they would be punished with imprisonment and forced labour with corporal punishment for up to three years. In contrast, if settlers broke the same regulations, they were to be punished with a penalty fee of up to 600 Marks or imprisonment for six weeks.⁶³⁹

With the outbreak of the conflict, and after having recovered from the initial shock of the rebellion, many Africans were lynched and killed regardless of whether they had participated in the rebellion. Many were hanged from trees or beaten to death.⁶⁴⁰ These incidents saw the war escalate and soon spread beyond the vicinity of Okahandja, and within days it reached as far as the coastal town of Swakopmund.⁶⁴¹ In Windhoek, detailed precautions were also taken for inhabitants. All able-bodied men were called up for service, stores and hotels were taken by the military authorities to house civilians as well as troops and the outer perimeter of the town was to be abandoned. Furthermore, the government would pay for the subsistence of women and children and there would be established public kitchens to feed civilians and soldiers alike, with the food being rationed by officials. This also included the indigenous people in Windhoek who had either not been killed by the settlers or who were loyal to the German administration. Particularly, the Berg-Damara

⁶³⁶ BAB: R 1001/2112: Bericht, Chief engineer at the Otavi Eisenbahnbau, Arthur Koppel, 77.

⁶³⁷ BAB: R 1001/2112: Verfügung, enclosed in Bericht, Chief engineer at the Otavi Eisenbahnbau, Arthur Koppel, Articles 1,3 and 4.

⁶³⁸ Ibid., Article 6.

⁶³⁹ Ibid., Article 11.

⁶⁴⁰ Olusoga and Erichsen, *Kaiser's Holocaust*, 129.

⁶⁴¹ BAB: R 1001/2111: Paul Fuchs to Auswärtiges Amt, 15 January 1904.

troops were also to receive free meals, albeit at the ‘rates of a native soldier.’⁶⁴² Windhoek was, similar to Bulawayo in 1896, a town in a state of war. The anxiety and preparations made reveal that the sentiment of settlers and officials in both GSWA and Berlin already considered the Herero rebellion to be a major colonial war a few days after its outbreak. Indeed, it was already deemed necessary to use great military power to overcome the Herero. These fears, paired with exaggerated reports caused a tremendous outcry for revenge upon reaching Germany, providing an incentive to intervene swiftly.⁶⁴³ Cape views on the outbreak of the rebellion, however, were more concerned by the challenges with which the *Schutztruppe* would be faced.

With regard to the natives, they have not the same pluck or fighting tactics as the Zulu or Matabele had. They will never come out and attack en masse, and there will be no opportunity of mowing them down with machine-guns and rifles.⁶⁴⁴

The immediate response by the British to the outbreak was ambivalent: while the difficulties of a colonial war were recognised as a troublesome affair which could have consequences on their side of the border, they were nonetheless left puzzled by the tactics of the Herero. On Samuel Maherero’s orders, it was only German men who were killed by the rebels – British, Boers and women and children were spared.⁶⁴⁵ Therefore, the same article, which was kept by the *Reichskolonialamt*, questions the authenticity of the allegations of the rebels having molested settlers because it was only Germans that was targeted. Instead, the deaths of German male settlers were a consequence of the brutalities of their treatment of the Herero.⁶⁴⁶ From a British perspective, however, this displayed the fact that ‘the natives have been treated well and fairly by the missionaries and the English, and badly by the Germans.’⁶⁴⁷ Yet, when the Herero rose in rebellion, it was not only the German authorities that were notified and expressed concerns. Magistrate Cleverly in Walvis Bay reported to London on the dire situation:

There is said to be an understanding with all the Native races to make once and for all, a last and desperate struggle against the German supremacy. This is the more significant because the leaders are fully aware that the end is inevitable, and that the retribution will be of the most drastic nature. From the opinion expressed by the Germans themselves little short of the extermination of the tribes in the protectorate will result.⁶⁴⁸

⁶⁴² BAB: R 1001/2112: Proclamation, Windhuk 16 January 1904.

⁶⁴³ Olusoga and Erichsen, *Kaiser’s Holocaust*, 131.

⁶⁴⁴ BAB: R 1001/2112: Excerpt of *The Cape Argus*, 28 January 1904.

⁶⁴⁵ Erichsen, *Angel of Death*, 5.

⁶⁴⁶ BAB: R 1001/2112: Excerpt of *The Cape Argus*, 28 January 1904.

⁶⁴⁷ TNA: FO 64/1645: Report by Gleichen, enclosed in Lascelles to Lansdowne, 9 April 1904.

⁶⁴⁸ TNA: FO 64/1645: Report on State of Affairs in the German Protectorate by John Cleverly, 20 January 1904, 1-2.

Unwittingly, Cleverly predicted the atrocities that would soon consume GSWA. Furthermore, he believed that it was not only the Herero but indeed 'the tribes' that would be exterminated. German colonial ambitions then, according to Cleverly, would only succeed with the extermination of the entire local population. The British government, therefore, were in possession of a report that predicted the atrocities that were to be committed only eight days after the rebellion had broken out.

The early stages of the conflict highlight the abusive practices taken by both settlers and officials but also indicate the fragility of German colonial rule. With the arrival of German troops, however, the Herero now faced, like the Ndebele, a long and defensive war. However, until June 1904, the Germans remained on the defensive, handing the Herero the initiative, but again similar to the Ndebele, the Herero failed to sustain an offensive and to cut off Windhoek from the coast. The Germans were therefore allowed to rally, gather supplies and wear off the initial rebellion without sustaining decisive losses.

Upon his return to Windhoek via ship from Port Nolloth in British territory to Swakopmund on the GSWA coast, Leutwein began to outline the response that should be employed against the Herero. The *Reichskolonialamt* and Leutwein agreed that 'after the outrages the Herero have committed, nothing short of unconditional surrender will have to be enforced.' However, Leutwein disagreed with 'those fanatics who want to see the Herero destroyed altogether.'⁶⁴⁹ Furthermore, Leutwein stressed that the public opinion in Germany, which at this time was clamouring for vengeance, was 'blind to the actual conditions.'⁶⁵⁰ In a bid to bring the hostilities to a prompt conclusion, Leutwein therefore issued a proclamation to the Herero:

Hereros! Since you have revolted against the German Emperor and shot his soldiers, you know that you can now expect a fight to the death. But you can prevent it by coming to me and hand over your guns and ammunition and face fair punishment.

I am well aware that many of you carry no guilt and those can come to me in peace and I will spare their life. No mercy can be given to those who murdered white people and robbed them in their homes. These will be brought to justice and must face the debt of their guilt. But you others who have no such debt, be wise, and do not place your fate with those guilty. Leave them and save your lives!

This I say to you as representative of your supreme lord, the German Emperor.⁶⁵¹

Needless to say, Leutwein's proclamation had little effect. The Herero remained in open rebellion despite the situation gradually turning against their favour. In March 1904, the main body of German troops had been assembled and were ready for action. Going on the

⁶⁴⁹ Drechsler, *Let us Die Fighting*, 148.

⁶⁵⁰ BAB: R 1001/2115: Leutwein to Auswärtiges Amt, Kolonial Abt., 3 April 1904.

⁶⁵¹ Ibid.

offensive, however, Leutwein continued to run into trouble. For instance, on April 13th 1904, a German force was encircled by the Herero at Oviumbo. During the night, the Germans escaped and avoided what could have been a decisive defeat. This saw Leutwein to once more take a defensive stance in the war and to wait for further reinforcements.⁶⁵² Consequently, Leutwein requested that the *Reichskolonialamt* sent a senior officer along with reinforcements. Not only was Leutwein himself disillusioned with the situation, the German government in Berlin too were unsatisfied by his actions and that he had resumed correspondence with Samuel Maherero to negotiate peace.⁶⁵³ The ensuing dismissal of Leutwein was received negatively by the British, as it was believed that this would 'be a distinct misfortune and would probably result in a general rising of all natives in the country.'⁶⁵⁴ Indeed, Leutwein was generally favoured by the British, as it was believed that he saw British colonialism as an inspiration, especially concerning its *Eingeborenenpolitik* (native policy). This can be exemplified in Leutwein's memoir, *Elf Jahre Gouverneur* (1907) where he claimed that the British had been better at 'convincing the natives' of their colonial cause and Britain could thus rule its colonies with 'a nominal presence.'⁶⁵⁵

Leutwein's replacement was General Lothar von Trotha, who arrived in GSWA in July 1904. Upon his arrival, a martial law was proclaimed transferring military and administrative authority in GSWA from the governor to the commander of the *Schutztruppe*.⁶⁵⁶ GSWA thus became a military-run colony where the supreme authority was the commander in chief of the *Schutztruppe* and according to Bley, this was, in effect, Trotha's 'personal military dictatorship.'⁶⁵⁷ Trotha had previous experience in colonial warfare in German East Africa where he waged a brutal total war to suppress the Wahehe rebellion in 1894.⁶⁵⁸ His strategy was to strike the Herero with one decisive blow to either force negotiations, which was unlikely due to its unpopularity with both the public in Germany and the settlers, or, as Trotha wished, to completely destroy the Herero capability to fight. Indicatively, Trotha's view on the war was that 'against nonhumans [*unmenschen*] one cannot conduct war humanely.'⁶⁵⁹

⁶⁵² Drechsler, *Let us Die Fighting*, 149.

⁶⁵³ Bley, *Namibia under German Rule*, 153.

⁶⁵⁴ TNA: FO 64/1645: Report on State of in the neighbourhood of Walfisch Bay, 4 June 1904 by John Cleverly, 4 June 1904, 1-2.

⁶⁵⁵ Theodor Leutwin, *Elf Jahre Gueverneuer in Deutsch-Südwestafrika* (Berlin, 1908), 543-44.

⁶⁵⁶ BAB: R 1001/2033: Gezant Wilhelm to Oberkommando der Schutztruppen, 28 July 1904.

⁶⁵⁷ Bley, *Namibia under German Rule*, 159.

⁶⁵⁸ Olusoga and Erichsen, *Kaiser's Holocaust*, 138.

⁶⁵⁹ Hull, *Absolute Destruction*, 33.

The decisive battle came in August 1904 at the Waterberg plateau, where a large group of Herero had gathered. The German force – about 4,000 strong, with horses, oxen, 36 artillery pieces and 14 machine guns – began to surround the Herero, leaving the south-eastern flank, towards the Omaheke desert, exposed.⁶⁶⁰ According to Isabel Hull, the decision to leave the flank towards the Omaheke open was because of military incompetence on the side of the Germans.⁶⁶¹ Olusoga and Erichsen, however, argue that this decision was part of Trotha's intention to exterminate the Herero altogether, claiming that he knew that if they fled this way, they would die of thirst and exhaustion.⁶⁶² Similarly, Zimmerer too argues that the genocide began at Waterberg, where 'the Omaheke would finish the extermination' begun by the Germans.⁶⁶³ However, as Henrik Lundtofte notes, the strategic logic of the Germans was that the Herero were least likely to flee in this direction.⁶⁶⁴ Hence, there remain a disagreement regarding the intention of the Germans at Waterberg and thus when the genocide commenced. At the time, the distinction between military and civilian targets became increasingly blurred. Trotha favoured total war and his experience at the brutal battle of Sedan during the Franco-Prussian war in 1870-1 may have shaped his perception of warfare.⁶⁶⁵ As Gesine Krüger, among others, has shown, total war was the norm for the colonial powers in Africa, as it not only focused on military targets but also on civilian targets.⁶⁶⁶ In fact, the previous case study of Southern Rhodesia in 1896, may serve well as an illustration of a colonial 'total war' as it was the Ndebele people as a whole who were targeted for complete subjugation, but not extermination.

The key moment that differentiated Southern Rhodesia from GSWA – total war from genocide – came in the immediate aftermath of Waterberg where thousands Herero survivors found themselves in the Omaheke desert, which was *terra incognita* for Europeans. According to Lundtofte, when the Herero fled into the Omaheke, Trotha was handed the opportunity to commit genocide and seek the destruction of the Herero people. When Trotha then gave the order for the troops to pursue the Herero, the nature of the conflict changed from total war to genocide. Instead of seeking the subjugation of the Herero, Trotha

⁶⁶⁰ Jon Bridgman, *Revolt of the Hereros* (London, 1981), 113-21.

⁶⁶¹ Hull, *Absolute Destruction*, 37.

⁶⁶² Olusoga and Erichsen, *Kaiser's Holocaust*, 145.

⁶⁶³ Zimmerer, 'War, Concentration Camps and Genocide', 49.

⁶⁶⁴ Henrik Lundtofte, "'Ich glaube, dass die Nation als solche vernichtet werden muss...' – Radikalisierung auf den tyske nedkæmpen af hereroopstanden 1904', *Den Jyske Historiker*, 90 (2000), 84-85.

⁶⁶⁵ Ibid., 85-86. Also, Walter Nuhn, *Sturm über Südwest: Der Hereroaufstand von 1905 – Ein düsteres Kapitel der deutschen kolonialen Vergangenheit Namibias* (Bonn, 1997), 202.

⁶⁶⁶ Gesine Krüger, *Kriegsbewältigung und Geschichtsbewusstsein: Realität, Deutung und Verarbeitung des deutschen Kolonialkriegs in Namibia* (Göttingen, 1999), 62.

now sought their physical extermination.⁶⁶⁷ However, the pursuit was impractical as it exhausted the German troops and the order was soon retracted.⁶⁶⁸ Instead of pursuing them, Trotha attempted to uphold his strategy of extermination by ordering his men to prevent the Herero from returning to Hereroland. It was then that Trotha issued his infamous *Vernichtungsbefehl* [Extermination Order], which is often considered to mark the start of the genocide, as it is a clear statement of genocidal intention.⁶⁶⁹

The Herero people must now leave the country. If the people does not do so I will force it to do so with cannon. Within the German frontiers every Herero, with or without arms will be shot. I will no longer receive any women or children but will either drive them back to their own peoples or have them fired at. These are my words to the Herero people.⁶⁷⁰

Trotha also sent along instructions to this order, including that the soldiers were to shoot over the heads of women and children so they would run away. This, he claimed, would make sure ‘no male prisoners would be taken, but also that no atrocities would take place towards women and children.’⁶⁷¹ Despite such instructions, women and children were also murdered in the genocide that ensued, and scaring them away meant that they were often left to die of thirst and starvation rather than being shot.

The conduct of the German troops remained brutal in nature throughout the conflict. An account from a German officer, von Beesten, is indicative hereof. A group of Herero survivors had made contact and had been promised that they would not be harmed if they came in with their weapons. Soon after, a group of Herero and a few captains came in to meet Beesten at a farmhouse. However, prior to the negotiations, Beesten had prepared his troops but ordered them not to open fire until he gave the command. The negotiations quickly went sour:

Already at my first condition of handing over the weapons I met resistance. We discussed the issue for about half an hour – the Herero chiefs refused to hand in their weapons unless the German soldiers put away their guns. I told Lt. von Hammerstein that the Herero are about to start a battle and that he should begin flanking their right wing. I then broke off the negotiations immediately.⁶⁷²

He then gave the order to open fire and the Herero, caught in a fenced closure, were mowed down. Excesses such as this were not uncommon and were well known to both German and British officials throughout the entire affair. Cleverly at Walvis Bay was plainly aware of the

⁶⁶⁷ Lundtofte, “‘Ich glaube’”, 88-90.

⁶⁶⁸ Hull, *Absolute Destruction*, 42.

⁶⁶⁹ Ibid., 55.

⁶⁷⁰ TNA: FO 64/1647: Proclamation by Trotha in Trench to Lansdowne, 15 November 1905.

⁶⁷¹ Bley, *Namibia under German Rule*, 164.

⁶⁷² BAB: R 1001/2117: Bericht, Oberleutnant von Beesten, [undated] November 1904.

brutalities and even before von Trotha's appointment and the battle at Waterberg he reported on the 'general feeling among the Germans' which was characterised by 'an unreasoning and vindictive bitterness which is almost as nearly allied to barbarism as the unbridled passions of the Herero themselves.' Indeed, rumours of bayoneted Herero women were reported by Cleverly, who noted that the Germans were not representative of proper civilised European warfare, which he had otherwise suggested in his previous conversations with Witbooi.⁶⁷³

There is a tendency in the historiography to focus on the Herero aspect of the conflict. This is perhaps best illustrated by the frequent terming of the genocide as the 'Herero genocide', disregarding the horrors suffered by other groups such as the Nama and the Basters. The Herero were the largest group and made up the most victims, but as Henning Melber has suggested, this may be an attempt to monopolise history in order to obtain legal rights to land, secure more development funding and perhaps even to secure a bigger proportion of the protracted German reparations.⁶⁷⁴ In fact, the *Vernichtungsbefehl* was soon extended to target the Nama too after they abandoned their allegiance to the Germans after Waterberg and took up arms. In his new proclamation to 'the Hottentots', Trotha promised that no harm would come to anyone except those who, by participating in the murder of whites, had 'forfeited the right to live.' However, Trotha's strongest emphasis was that the same fate suffered by the Herero would soon come to the Nama. 'I ask you, where are the people of the Herero today? Where are their Chiefs? Some of them have died of hunger and thirst in the desert, some by German troops. This will be the fate of the Hottentots if they do not give themselves up.'⁶⁷⁵

In the opening days of the Nama rebellion, approximately forty settlers were killed. Similar to the Herero, the Nama spared women and children, only killing German men who did not 'bear the Witbooi mark' (a sign of Nama friendship). Indeed, there were even cases of Nama warriors escorting women and children to German forts or settlements, risking their own lives in the process.⁶⁷⁶ The Nama fought a completely different war from the Herero and caused the Germans trouble for years. By applying guerrilla tactics much akin to

⁶⁷³ TNA: FO 64/1645: Report by Cleverly, enclosed in Hutchinson to Lansdowne, 30 May 1904.

⁶⁷⁴ Henning Melber, 'How to come to terms with the past: Re-visiting the German colonial genocide in Namibia', *Afrika Spectrum*, 40, 1 (2005), 141. Melber's article may, however, be slightly outdated as the Herero and Nama jointly decided to sue the German state in January 2017. Nevertheless, the main issue here is that the past remains a contentious theme in both Germany and Namibia.

⁶⁷⁵ Zimmerer, 'War, Concentration Camps and Genocide', 51-52.

⁶⁷⁶ Drechsler, *Let us Die Fighting*, 184.

the Ndebele in the Matopos, the Nama utilised the rugged terrain in southern GSWA and thereby avoided facing the Germans in a large-scale battle like Waterberg.⁶⁷⁷

The reason for the Nama uprising is uncertain; according to Olusoga and Erichsen, the Nama, having witnessed the massacre at Waterberg, decided to rise because they were alarmed by the brutality of the Germans and feared that after the Herero, they were next.⁶⁷⁸ According to Zimmerer, however, it was a response to Trotha's *Vernichtungsbefehl* and the continuous pressure from settlers, who saw the situation as a chance to finally disarm the Nama and subjugate them completely.⁶⁷⁹ Drechsler points to continuous excesses by settlers and to public statements in newspapers such as the *Deutsch-Südwestafrikanische Zeitung* (GSWA Newspaper), which many Nama were able to read, in which the 'native question' was openly discussed. Here the settlers called for the complete subjugation of the Nama, although they were at peace at the time, and despite the fact that Witbooi had even supported the Germans with over 100 men.⁶⁸⁰ Considering these various potential, yet relatively similar, causes, it seems plausible that the presence of a large German force, outspoken hostilities towards the Nama combined with their own experiences of German colonial warfare, that the Nama found a pre-emptive strike the best solution.

The Nama rebellion proved further trouble for the Germans troops, who were already overstretched in their failing strategy of patrolling the borders of the Omaheke.⁶⁸¹ It was not until the spring of 1905 that Trotha could move south to counter the Nama. This therefore put further pressure upon the German military and caused further disillusionment in Berlin, where the *Vernichtungsbefehl* was already unpopular. Several officials in Berlin and GSWA, most notably Leutwein, had lamented the *Vernichtungsbefehl* for various reasons deriving from its inhumane nature, but also because the Herero were considered a vital source of labour.⁶⁸² When the *Vernichtungsbefehl* was retracted by the Kaiser in December 1904, it was the dawn of a new stage in the conflict which saw the introduction of concentration camps.⁶⁸³ Instead of shooting the Herero men and driving the women and children back into the desert, the Herero were now to be kept as a source of forced labour to develop the colony. Although camps had already been established earlier, December 1904 was perhaps the moment when they became the key feature and main legacy of German colonial rule in GSWA.

⁶⁷⁷ Zimmerer, 'War, Concentration Camps and Genocide', 52-53.

⁶⁷⁸ Olusoga and Erichsen, *Kaiser's Holocaust*, 173-74.

⁶⁷⁹ Zimmerer, 'War, Concentration Camps and Genocide', 51.

⁶⁸⁰ Drechsler, *Let us Die Fighting*, 176-78.

⁶⁸¹ Ibid., 187-88.

⁶⁸² Bley, *Namibia under German Rule*, 166.

⁶⁸³ Lundtofte, "'Ich glaube'", 93.

Concentration Camps and Genocide

The conditions in the concentration camps were abhorrent, and as Casper Erichsen describes, the prisoners 'were deprived of their humanity' by, for instance, constant beatings and rape, as well as being forced to stay 'huddled together like animals' by barbed wire.⁶⁸⁴ The mortality rate of the prisoners in these camps remains uncertain, but Joachim Zeller estimates that between October 1904 and March 1907, out of the total 17,000 prisoners (roughly 15,000 Herero and 2,000 Nama), 7,682 (45.2%) died.⁶⁸⁵

Several camps were established throughout GSWA, but perhaps the two most notable were the Swakopmund camp and the Shark Island camp near Lüderitz. The strategy was to send the prisoners away from their respective homelands to strange and foreign climates where they had little opportunity to return and were more likely to fall ill. Therefore, the Herero were sent south and out to the coast to Shark Island and Swakopmund, while the Nama were, at first, sent to Windhoek in the central part of GSWA, before being sent to Shark Island later in the conflict.⁶⁸⁶ Erichsen labels Shark Island as 'death island' in his thorough study of the concentration camp located there.⁶⁸⁷ Conversely, however, Jonas Kreienbaum suggests that Shark Island, despite the horrors that occurred, was not intended for exterminatory purposes because of labour shortage and furthermore, measures were taken to attempt to improve the conditions.⁶⁸⁸ This exposes the contradictory intentions with these camps: they were used as labour pools at the same time as they were saw the implementation of exterminatory practices. In other words, the German administration sought to simultaneously exploit and exterminate.

The prisoners at Shark Island and the smaller camp on the mainland were subjected to forced labour, as in the other camps throughout GSWA. In Lüderitz, however, the need for labour was dire as not only one but two major construction projects were underway: one was the construction of the Lüderitzbucht Railway to Kubub and the other was the expansion of the harbour.⁶⁸⁹ Taking the latter as an example, this was a bid for the Germans to finally break the monopoly of Walvis Bay so that larger ships could be facilitated in

⁶⁸⁴ Erichsen, *Angel of Death*, 64.

⁶⁸⁵ Jonas Kreienbaum, "'Vernichtungslager'" in Deutsch-Südwestafrika? Zur Funktion der Konzentrationlager im Herero- und Namakrieg (1904-1908)', *Zeitschrift für Geschichtswissenschaft*, 58, 12 (2010), 1016. See also, Joachim Zeller, "'Ombekera I koza – The Cold is Killing Me": A History of the Concentration Camp in Swakopmund (1904-1908)' in Zimmerer and Zeller (eds.), *Genocide in German South-West Africa*, 76.

⁶⁸⁶ Erichsen, *Angel of Death*, 104.

⁶⁸⁷ Ibid., 120.

⁶⁸⁸ Jonas Kreienbaum, 'Guerrilla wars and colonial concentration camps. The exceptional case of German South West Africa, (1904-1908)', *Journal of Namibian Studies*, 11 (2012), 94.

⁶⁸⁹ TNA: FO 367/11: Report from Trench to Secretary to the War Office, London, 15 March 1906.

German territory rather than British. Suspiciously, the plans for the expansion of the harbour came conveniently at the exact same time as a large number of Nama prisoners arrived in October 1906.⁶⁹⁰ The construction of the harbour included dangerous work such as blowing up boulders for a wave breaker, which claimed many casualties. This prompted the technician overseeing the construction, Müller, to express his concern, not over the mistreatment of the indigenous peoples and their deaths, but also over the potential lack of manpower caused by the death toll:

Contrary to the report of the Imperial Harbour Division of October 6, 1906 (...), in which it is expressly said that 1600 Nama prisoners will be set at the disposal of the Hafenamt (harbour administration), I now have only 30-40 men at my disposal. The desired outcome is therefore not achievable. The reason for decline [in productivity] is to be found in the fact that 7-8 Nama die daily. On the 7th of this month as many as 17 died in one night. If measures are not actively taken to acquire [new] labourers, I fear the work will not be completed.⁶⁹¹

Such clear indication of slavery-like conditions did not suddenly occur as the conflict progressed. Indeed, even before Waterberg, there were already plans and considerations pertaining to the 'native question'. The plan of deportation to a distant location where they would work as labourers was argued to have an 'educative' effect and upon return to GSWA and their tribes 'the fear and subordination of Germany would spread.'⁶⁹² While there was a widespread sentiment that the Herero were a source of labour that needed to be utilised, there were also demands that they were to be punished for their crimes in taking up arms. For instance, the settlers in the Grootfontein district expressed ideals embedded in racist rhetoric in their view on how the colony should be developed:

Only if the native feels that he works and is subjected to laws, will he be a useful member of the human race. In the beginning he will be reluctant to be under the compulsion of the law. The habit of work will finally let him realise the benefits of this compulsion. We whites believed these measures to be a necessity in order to bring the governments' authority to the coloured people. This will support the economic development of the colony and bring justice and prevent the desire for uprisings.⁶⁹³

Such views were supported by Paul Rohrbach, an expert on the socio-economic sustainability of GSWA, who had been a crucial figure for both settlers and the German government throughout the period. According to him, it would be healthy for the Herero and Nama to be in the service of the Germans as forced labourers, as it would teach them to create value and 'earn a right to existence.'⁶⁹⁴ Furthermore, the German Consul to the Cape, Baron von

⁶⁹⁰ Erichsen, *Angel of Death*, 114.

⁶⁹¹ Quoted in *Ibid.*, 117-18.

⁶⁹² BAB: R 1001/2114: Deutschen Kolonialzeitung to Auswärtiges Amt, Kolonial Abt, 5 May 1904.

⁶⁹³ BAB: R 1001/2221: Petition der Ansiedler des Distrikts Grootfontein, 20 September 1904.

⁶⁹⁴ Rohrbach, *Der Deutsche Gedanke*, 134.

Nettelblatt, had directly stated that ‘forced labour appears to be the only satisfactory way of dealing with the natives.’⁶⁹⁵ Indeed, Hartmann probably saw the opportunity to finally create the aforementioned ‘mining population’ he so sought after.

In addition to creating a source of manpower and satisfy demands for punishment, the aim of the concentration camp policy was also to reduce the indigenous population. There were two main reasons for this: first, by diminishing the numbers of Herero and Nama, there would be more land for German settlers to purchase and cultivate. This would, in turn, be a pivotal step towards establishing a settler colony, thus realising the *Lebensraum* ideology and creating a German *Heimat* in Africa. Secondly, if their numbers were significantly reduced, the *Reichskolonialamt* were more likely to be persuaded into deporting these peoples altogether, as it would be done at a lesser expense.⁶⁹⁶ Therefore, the intention of the Shark Island death camp was undoubtedly the extermination of its inmates, either by working them to death or by leaving them to die of starvation and disease.

One further characteristic of these camps is also their connection to the scientific racialism at the time. From these camps, a large number of Herero and Nama skulls were exported to universities and institutes in Germany for craniometrical purposes. As camp officer Ralph Zürn stated, ‘taking and preserving skulls of the prisoners would be more readily possible in the camps than in the country where there is always the danger of offending the natives.’ Olusoga and Erichsen, in their account of the horrors in the Shark Island camp, describes how Herero and Nama women were forced to boil and scrape off the flesh of the severed heads of fellow prisoners.⁶⁹⁷ Anthropologists believed skulls to be an object in which racial inferiority (or superiority) could be observed. For instance, Hermann Schaafhausen, a prominent German anthropologist, associated the position of jaws to the ‘evolutionary stage’ of different human races, for ‘when the jaws push forward, the forehead remains behind. Where the urge to eat prevails, thinking is less developed. This is an indicator of low cultural development.’⁶⁹⁸

Indeed, the reason for these camps was not merely practical to secure a source of forced labour and as a means to counter guerrilla warfare: there was also an aspect of revenge behind it. The gradual radicalisation of the conflict from colonial uprising to total war and then to genocide had been sustained by a prevailing dehumanisation of Africans which had

⁶⁹⁵ TNA: FO 64/1645: Article by Baron von Nettelblatt in *The South African News*, 31 May 1904, enclosed in Hutchinson to Lansdowne, 1 June 1904.

⁶⁹⁶ Olusoga and Erichsen, *Kaiser's Holocaust*, 219.

⁶⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 224.

⁶⁹⁸ Zimmerman, *Anthropology and Antihumanism*, 91.

been promoted by scientific racialism.⁶⁹⁹ This may explain the radical policies and actions taken by German officials, and furthermore, gives inclination to drawing connections to the Holocaust. It presents a startling resemblance to the later horrors of the Holocaust and therefore connections through time cannot and should not be completely refuted. Yet it remains problematic if these are deterministically over-emphasised by, for instance, suggesting outright causality, because continuities and developments through time are often subtle. Indeed, the connection between anthropologists in Germany and the authorities in GSWA does not automatically mean that it was a gateway for introducing Nazi ideals into the German state and national identity. German anthropologists were not alone in perceiving skulls as an object through which to study race nor were they alone in collecting them.

Anthropology, largely being an ‘armchair science’, was based in Europe, with relatively few field trips being conducted. The concentration camps therefore facilitated a cheap and efficient way of gathering objects for anthropological studies. But there can be little doubt that the mistreatment of the Herero and Nama at Shark Island and elsewhere were the culmination of colonial rule embedded in racial rhetoric and convictions. This was not only expressed by the concentration camps policy, but also by different administrative acts such as ordinances on the use and type of sjamboks, which indicates the close relations between the colonial administration and violent practices in GSWA.⁷⁰⁰

A New Casement Report?

In April 1905, Colonel Frederick Trench was sent by the British to GSWA as a Military Attaché in a move undoubtedly intended to keep a check on the movements and fighting strength of the *Schutztruppe* should it pose a threat to British territory and interests. Trench was *persona grata* in the German court and was acquainted with the Kaiser himself.⁷⁰¹ Over the course of the campaign in GSWA Trench transmitted numerous reports to the authorities in Cape Town, who then forwarded them to Whitehall. These reports were substantial and very detailed and mostly concerned issues as unexciting as the setting up of fences and the digging of wells. However, regarding the concentration camps, these reports remain some of the most profound and compelling contemporary evidence of the horrors that unfolded.

Upon visiting the camps, Trench reported that ‘the number of prisoners at the hands of the authorities at Lüderitzbucht, Swakopmund etc. does not increase. The Chief Staff

⁶⁹⁹ Lundtofte, “‘Ich glaube’”, 98-99.

⁷⁰⁰ BAB: R 1001/2040: Runderlass by Friedrich von Lindequist, 22 December 1905.

⁷⁰¹ Lindner, *Koloniale Begegnungen*, 240-41.

Officer tells me that of the 7000 Herero, Hottentots etc. 500 die every month on an average. “The sea air and the food they get do not agree with them!”⁷⁰² When Trench visited Lüderitz in March 1906, it was in many ways the culmination of the aforementioned racist perceptions that had come to fruition, which met him at Shark Island. The report not only notified the British and Cape authorities to the slave-like conditions discussed above, but also gave clear indications regarding the conditions within the camp itself, in which the horrendous state of the prisoners was vividly described:

They look very feeble, and the camp out among a lot of rocks is very wretched and filthy. There seems to be absolutely no attempt at sanitation and, though it is cold enough for officers to wear their cloaks on their way to a mess evening, the prisoners seem to have no clothing save a blanket or so, and no shelter save what they can rig up for themselves with sacks etc. The island is much exposed to the cold S.S.W wind – which always seems to blow here – and dysentery and pneumonia seem prevalent as before. Dante might have written a notice for the gate.⁷⁰³

The reference to Dante’s tale of the inferno, in particular, has sparked attention by scholars and is used to illustrate the horrors that unfolded at Shark Island as well as exhibiting an unwitting foreshadowing of the ‘*arbeit macht frei*’ sign at the concentration camps of Nazi Germany. Trench also came across information about the Nama who had been deported to Togo, where ‘I understand that 90% of the Witbooi soldiers who fought for the Germans against the Herero are already dead.’⁷⁰⁴ Clearly the British were well aware of what happened at Shark Island and beyond. Their knowledge was not restricted purely to the excessive violence employed by the *Schutztruppe* in the actual warfare itself, but also included detailed knowledge about the treatment of entire indigenous peoples in GSWA, whether rebels or not.

Trench’s reports on the treatment of the prisoners confirmed the accounts given by refugees when they crossed into British territory.⁷⁰⁵ However, virtually none of these were included in official correspondence and they would therefore only be accessible – if at all – in Southern Africa, whether in Namibia or South Africa.⁷⁰⁶ Trench was the man-on-the-spot for Britain and therefore these reports remain valuable sources that represent perhaps the most vivid evidence circulated in Whitehall on the genocide. Indeed, Trench visited many

⁷⁰² TNA: FO 64/1647: Report by Colonel FJA Trench to Chief Staff Officer, Cape Town, 3 September 1905, 2-3.

⁷⁰³ TNA: FO 367/8: Report from Trench to War Office, 15 March 1906, 8-9.

⁷⁰⁴ Ibid., 9.

⁷⁰⁵ TNA: FO 65/1647: Report from Major Berrange Upington to Commander of Cape Mounted Police, 20 October 1905.

⁷⁰⁶ There is no known work dealing with these accounts except the Blue Book. The accounts of the refugees would have had to be transcribed by British officials which seems unlikely to have been done regularly. Nevertheless, the best piece on the Herero side of the affair remains Gewald, *Herero Heroes*.

places where he could personally visit the concentration or ‘prisoner camps’. What is notable here is the different treatment in the camps of Shark Island and Swakopmund. Of course, both were horrific, but in Swakopmund, where the majority of inmates were Herero, the conditions were, in comparison, less appalling:

Both men and women are strong and healthy – and very different to the wretched people at Lüderitzbucht. They are said to get a lot of food from the people they work for and with – they could not do the work they do on their official ration. They get no pay whatever, although the Governor contemplates giving the best workers a couple of shillings, or so, a month, in future.⁷⁰⁷

The Herero prisoners at Swakopmund, although Trench claims them to be in a healthy condition, were nonetheless used as forced labourers in a state reminiscent to slavery. As for the Herero women, Trench noted that ‘the handsome are very well dressed while the plain ones go in sack-cloths and rags. Verbum Sap.’⁷⁰⁸ The reference to the handsome Herero women, therefore, suggests that they were used by the Germans as sexual slaves, or were victims of consistent rape.⁷⁰⁹ As Erichsen has shown, ‘the uncommon climate, general maltreatment and forced labour were all part of daily existence.’⁷¹⁰ The camp, made up of iron sheets, was administrated by the military, and the majority of the Herero inmates were women and children. This was not because the men were kept separate, for women and children too were used as forced labourers: rather, it was because most of the men had already been killed.⁷¹¹

The statements by Trench in his reports were written in a way that suggests a possible censure imposed by the Germans. It seems feasible that the military command would not allow him to transmit such clear evidence to his superiors, but at the same time, receiving such reports also posed potential problems in Whitehall. Trench’s reports showcase the detailed knowledge the British government had of the atrocities in GSWA while they were unfolding. Yet, as had been done with reports on military misconduct in Southern Rhodesia, it was imperative for Whitehall to keep these reports and other pieces of undisputable evidence away from public attention because otherwise they could stir public opinion and reinvigorate the humanitarian criticism that was unfolding through the CRM. In other words, Trench’s reports could potentially present the British government with a new Casement Report.

⁷⁰⁷ TNA: FO 367/8: Report from Trench to Chief Staff Officer, Cape Colony District, 26 December 1905, 21-22

⁷⁰⁸ Ibid., 21-22.

⁷⁰⁹ Erichsen, *Angel of Death*, 64.

⁷¹⁰ Ibid., 57.

⁷¹¹ Ibid., 59-60.

The South African Precursor

With all these incidents and different measures of colonial violence perpetrated by the Germans, it remains to ascertain why this has been categorised as a genocide and how the concentration camp policy can be contextualised. One of the main reasons for the continuity thesis linking GSWA to the Holocaust about forty years later is the concentration camps used by the German authorities to hold prisoners. The concentration camp was not a German invention but was first used by the Spanish in Cuba and the Americans in the Philippines in 1898, before the more commonly known camps established by the British during the South African War. Nevertheless, the camps in GSWA have more frequently been associated with the camps in the Third Reich rather than the otherwise more geographically and chronologically appropriate linkage to the South African War in 1899-1902.⁷¹² Although the continuity thesis of 'from Africa to Auschwitz' remains symptomatic of a deterministic approach in which a contemporary context is generally ignored, there were clear differences between the concentration camps of GSWA and those of the South African War.⁷¹³ Therefore, it remains crucial to understand Britain's own experiences with concentration camps in order to scrutinise their perception of the German use of this same practice in GSWA.

The conditions of the concentration camps during the South African War were atrocious and saw a high death toll – especially among children. Camps were also established for African internees in South Africa which were perhaps more comparable to those in GSWA in terms of practices such as coerced labour and housing arrangements.⁷¹⁴ However, in terms of scale, they were incomparable to those in GSWA. According to Peter Warwick, the death toll of the 'black' South African camps may have been around 14,000 and the death toll in the 'white camps' about 26,000.⁷¹⁵ Furthermore, the mortality rate for Africans in these camps was, in fact, lower than that of the Boers (approximately 12% compared to 25%), which suggests that the camps in South Africa were not intentionally seeking the deprivation and death of the inmates. Indeed, while they cannot be vindicated, the concentration camps

⁷¹² Kreienbaum, "'Vernichtungslager'" in *Deutsch-Südwestafrika*, 1018-25. Kreienbaum questions whether the camps in GSWA were death camps at all and argues instead that they had strategic and oppressive intentions similar to those in South Africa 1899-1902.

⁷¹³ In addition to Madley, 'Africa to Auschwitz', see Zimmerer, *Von Windbuk nach Auschwitz?*.

⁷¹⁴ Jonas Kreienbaum, 'Deadly Learning? Concentration Camps and Zones in Colonial Wars around 1900' in Barth and Cvetkovski (eds.), *Imperial Co-Operation and Transfer*, 229.

⁷¹⁵ Peter Warwick, *Black People and the South African War, 1899-1902* (Cambridge, 1983), 145.

during the South African War had high death tolls because of logistical shortages, general maladministration and outbreaks of measles.⁷¹⁶

Nevertheless, the camps established for the Herero and Nama prisoners were undoubtedly inspired by the camps set up by the British in South Africa.⁷¹⁷ Yet, for the Germans, the camps in South Africa had been far worse because they held white prisoners.⁷¹⁸ However, the key difference between the camps in South Africa and those in GSWA was the intention behind them. In South Africa, the Boer population was designated as ‘refugees’ and were under ‘protective custody.’⁷¹⁹ The main aim was to curb the Boer guerrillas, whereas the Herero and Nama were ‘rebellious prisoners.’ As Kreienbaum notes, although the camps in GSWA were inspired by those of the South African War, the only clear ‘transferable aspect’ was the internment in guarded camps of women and children, since there was less of a guerrilla war in GSWA.⁷²⁰ However, this is only partially true, for while the Herero rarely employed guerrilla tactics, the Nama did. But unlike the Boers a few years beforehand, the Nama did not rely on a civil population to sustain their efforts: instead, they raided farms and conducted trade, mainly with African communities residing in British territory. Yet the Germans held Nama women and children regardless, indicating that unlike the camps in South Africa, these had more sinister and genocidal intentions. The British concentration camps had a rationale deduced from a military aspect of preventing Boer *bittereinders* to access supplies, but in GSWA, the prisoners posed no military threat. The Herero and Nama were kept far away from any conflict zones and the camps continued to operate long after the main fighting had ceased. For instance, while the Herero resistance was virtually gone by 1905-6, the prisoners were kept in these camps until 1908, when the camps were finally closed.

This difference in terms of the purpose and intention of the concentration camp policy in South Africa and GSWA respectively also reveals why the former has not been defined as a genocide, whereas the latter has. Indeed, *intention* is generally considered a crucial defining factor that constitutes whether or not acts of mass violence can be categorised as

⁷¹⁶ The lack of sanitation and the atrocious conditions of the camps are discussed in most literature on the South African War. For measles as a deadly killer among children see Bruce Fetter and Stowell Kessler, ‘Scars from a Childhood Disease: Measles in the Concentration Camps during the Boer War’ *Social Science History*, 20, 4 (1996).

⁷¹⁷ Lindner, ‘German Colonialism’, 257. See also, Kreienbaum, ‘Guerrilla wars and colonial concentration camps’.

⁷¹⁸ TNA: FO 64/1647: Trench to Lansdowne, 15 November 1905, 3.

⁷¹⁹ Lindsay Weiss, ‘Exceptional Space: Concentration Camps and Labour Compounds in Late Nineteenth-Century South Africa’ in Adrian Myers and Gabriel Moshenska, *Archaeologies of Internment* (New York, 2011), 25.

⁷²⁰ Kreienbaum, ‘Guerrilla wars and colonial concentration camps’, 98.

genocide.⁷²¹ The definition of the term ‘genocide’ is a widely discussed subject, especially since the inventor of the term, Raphael Lemkin, himself found many inconsistencies and problems in applying it.⁷²² Although the broader theme of genocide cannot be fully explored here, it is worth ascertaining how the atrocities in GSWA has been categorised as such. Considering the plain intentions exemplified by the *Vernichtungsbefehl*, there can be little doubt as to the sinister motives of the Germans. Nevertheless, there has been critique of the labelling of this affair as a genocide. The most well-known critics were Gunther Spraul and Brigitte Lau. Spraul pointed to the uncertainty of the mortality rate as a crucial aspect that has been neglected in characterising the violence in GSWA.⁷²³ Lau lamented the evidence of the Blue Book and questioned its credibility as a source to argue against the classification of genocide in GSWA.⁷²⁴

The 1948 UN Convention on genocide, which laid out an official and internationally acknowledged definition, listed various acts as genocidal, such as killing members of a ‘targeted’ group, causing serious bodily or mental harm, and ‘deliberately’ infliction conditions of life that will bring about the physical destruction of the group.⁷²⁵ Indeed, as Bethencourt has observed, the events in GSWA in 1904-8 thus clearly fulfil these criteria, categorising it as a genocide.⁷²⁶ However, as Dirk Moses has noted, ‘genocide is to be explained as the outcome of complex processes rather than ascribable solely to the evil intentions of wicked men.’⁷²⁷ It is therefore not enough merely to uncover the intention of the Germans in GSWA, but also the methods which they applied and the relations between perpetrator and victim. Thus, the application of concentration camps and their continued use after the fighting was over, in areas far away from the fighting, serves to prove that what unfolded in GSWA 1904-8 can be categorised as a genocide. Not only were the intentions plain but practices of extermination were also in place.

⁷²¹ See, for instance, Mohamed Adhikari, *The Anatomy of a South African Genocide: The Extermination of the Cape San Peoples* (Athens OH, 2010), 12. For a more general discussion in judicial terms, see Otto Triffterer, ‘Genocide, its particular intent to destroy in whole or in part the group as such’, *Leiden Journal of International Law*, 14 (2001).

⁷²² Martin Shaw, *What is Genocide?* (Cambridge, 2015), 4. For a discussion on Lemkin see, for instance, Dominic Schaller and Jürgen Zimmerer (eds.), Introduction, *The Origins of Genocide: Raphael Lemkin as a historian of mass violence* (London, 2009).

⁷²³ Gunter Spraul, ‘Der “Völkermord” an den Herero: Untersuchungen zu einer neuen Kontinuitätsthese’, *Geschichte in Wissenschaft und Unterricht*, 12 (1988), 726.

⁷²⁴ Lau, ‘Uncertain Certainties’.

⁷²⁵ See <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/CrimeOfGenocide.aspx> (accessed 16 May 2017).

⁷²⁶ Bethencourt, *Racisms*, 349.

⁷²⁷ Moses, ‘Empire, Colony, Genocide: Keywords and the Philosophy of History’, 7.

According to Lemkin, colonial genocides occurred when the majority group could not be absorbed by the minority rulers.⁷²⁸ In other words, the Herero and Nama posed a hindrance to the hegemony of German colonialism, and to overcome this problem, the conflict was radicalised and became a genocide to completely subjugate the Herero and Nama.⁷²⁹ As shown above, the conflict in GSWA was gradually radicalised as the conflict escalated and the Herero and Nama were continuously dehumanised. Furthermore, it adheres to the general conception in the historiography that the Nama and especially the Herero posed a hindrance to German colonialism. Therefore, after their defeat, the Herero would then 'perform work services and have their property removed' as well as having their entire territory annexed.⁷³⁰ This would enable German settlers to legally obtain the old Herero territory, which was the most fertile for cattle herding, providing the Germans with full control of the economy and resources.

However, applying the term 'genocide' to the affair in GSWA, while correct, also has consequences. Genocide was officially adopted as a term in 1948 in the wake of the horrors of the Holocaust, and therefore, applying the term to any given situation prior to the Holocaust is, to an extent, reductionist. More precisely, it reduces the genocide in GSWA to a precursor to the Holocaust. Certainly, similarities such as the concentration camps and the clear statements of exterminatory intent remain convincing parallels that invite the study of the genocide in GSWA as a historical precursor. But considering the context of colonial methods employed by the British and others, the concentration camps in South Africa, despite key dissimilarities, were indeed more comparable than those of the Holocaust.⁷³¹ Indeed, considering GSWA a precursor diminishes the colonial context and confines the Herero and Nama war and genocide within German history, since the main connection is that the perpetrator in both cases was the German state.

The general perception and response to the concentration camps in GSWA by British officials can only have been significantly influenced by the recent polemic they had experienced with the concentration camps of the South African war a few years prior. At the time, it was subject to heavy criticism both internationally and domestically.⁷³² Germany, being an ardent supporter of Boer independence, was one of the most vocal critics of this

⁷²⁸ Ibid., 9.

⁷²⁹ Schaller, 'From Conquest to Genocide', 311-13.

⁷³⁰ BAB: R 1001/2112: Report by Bezirksamtsmann Duft, 8 February 1904.

⁷³¹ See Madley, 'From Africa to Auschwitz', 447 contra Kreienbaum, "'Vernichtungslager'" in *Deutsch-Südwestafrika*, 1204-5.

⁷³² See, for instance, Bernard Porter, *Critics of Empire: British Radicals and the Imperial Challenge* (London, 1968).

practice. At home, the British government were dealing with various humanitarian groups and actors, perhaps most notably Emily Hobhouse, whom Alfred Milner referred to as ‘that bloody woman’ due to her meddling.⁷³³ This witnesses the place of such excessive colonial practices in the political arena – both domestically and internationally.

Therefore, when Germany established camps in GSWA where the inmates were deliberately being killed, it should – in theory – have been subject to heavy criticism, both in Germany and internationally. It would even present an opportunity for the British to claim a sense of moral vengeance against Germany for its criticism of Kitchener’s concentration camps and for their outright support for the Boers, especially since they had clear evidence from Trench. Of course, one factor that ensured that this did not happen may have been the fact that this time it was Africans and not whites who were suffering in the camps. However, another reason may be found in the Congo crisis, which was blazing at the time. Humanitarian groups were demanding that the conduct and administration of the European colonial regimes be scrutinised and to follow humane principles and uphold the rights of the indigenous peoples. Thus, at the time, imperialism was under severe scrutiny, and if Britain in 1904-8 wished to exhibit Germany as a new King Leopold, an unfit and cruel colonial oppressor, the time was ideal. Yet, the British government decided not to take action and exhibit the colonial maladministration of Germany to the public. They chose to uphold a colonial *omerta* and kept their knowledge of these atrocities to themselves until it could more purposefully be used. This suggests that Britain had no interests in showcasing Germany as an unfit colonial power in 1904-8. Considering the previous entanglements of GSWA and British South Africa, it may be considered whether British involvement was a reason to suppress such information. Therefore, it is imperative to investigate the British stance and interests towards the conflict as it unfolded and to assess the extent and nature of British involvement in this violent affair.

Between Collaboration and Anxiety: The ‘Friendly’ Neutrality of Britain

Ulrike Lindner terms Britain’s stance towards the war in GSWA ‘friendly neutrality.’⁷³⁴ Such friendly stance may have been reinforced by a purely economic perspective in which the war in GSWA was also to the Cape’s benefit as the investments made by Germany to quell the

⁷³³ Jenny de Reuck, ‘Social Suffering and the Politics of Pain: Observations on the Concentration Camps in the Anglo-Boer War 1899-1902’, *English in Africa*, 26, 2 (1999), 78.

⁷³⁴ Lindner, ‘Encounters over the Border’, 15.

rebellion soon found their way into British hands through trade, contracts and supply materials, particularly for railroads.⁷³⁵ Ever since the South African War, the economy had struggled. Therefore, when exports to GSWA increased due to the war, the Cape Government was willing to 'shut their eyes to the real destination of supplies' bought by the Germans. In fact, by the end of 1905, exports to GSWA were of such proportions that the Cape market was almost exhausted of mules and horses, causing the authorities to be concerned as to the accessibility of these animals for the Cape forces in case of war.⁷³⁶ These supplies constituted outright support for Germany and revealed that the friendly neutrality stance was perhaps too friendly at times.⁷³⁷

However, the stance remained rather ambiguous, for at the end of 1904 the Germans stored ammunition at Port Nolloth in British territory, fearing that if it were stored in GSWA, it would be a target of guerrilla raids. The British administration, upon learning such news decided to immediately close the border for trade, which immobilised the German war effort in southern GSWA. The border was later re-opened, but only for civilian goods.⁷³⁸ However, the Governor of the Cape, Walter Hely-Hutchinson, remained suspicious about the cross-border trade between the two colonies. In a letter to High Commissioner to South Africa, Selborne, he informed him that 'although there is not any conclusive proof, we have always felt sure that much of the supplies allowed to pass for the civil population have been used for the troops.' Furthermore, he had decided not to pass this information on to the government 'as I wish to avoid any step tending to embarrass the relations between the German Government and His Majesty's Government.'⁷³⁹ This conforms to Dederling's argument that one of the main issues at stake in the British border policy towards GSWA was the global political consequences, where it was not in the interest of British officials, particularly in London, to provoke Germany. Another key issue, according to Dederling, was the political and security interests of the Cape, where the British were afraid to exacerbate the existing dissatisfaction among their African subjects.⁷⁴⁰ Indicative hereof is the secret telegram responding to Hutchinson's above letter, 'His Majesty's Government desire to give Germans every facility which can be given without exciting natives on the British side, but the latter consideration must be paramount.'⁷⁴¹

⁷³⁵ Lindner, *Koloniale Begegnungen*, 247-48.

⁷³⁶ Dederling, 'War and Mobility', 280-81.

⁷³⁷ Lindner, *Koloniale Begegnungen*, 253.

⁷³⁸ Dederling, 'War and Mobility', 282.

⁷³⁹ TNA: FO 64/1647: Hutchinson to Lyttelton, 9 November 1905.

⁷⁴⁰ Dederling, 'War and Mobility', 278.

⁷⁴¹ TNA: FO 64/1647: Draft Telegram, [undated] by [unknown] reply to a secret telegram on 9 November 1905 to Governor, Cape Town.

British officials were therefore willing to help the German war effort, but only if it did not affect British foreign policies nor 'excite' the Africans in British territory. A few months after the correspondence between Hutchinson and Secretary of State for the Colonies, Alfred Lyttelton, on the extent of British support, a confidential military report may have caused their concerns to be worsened:

The native chiefs complain bitterly of the way in which the British Government is assisting the Germans. This seems a short-sighted policy as it seems to show that we have forgotten the assistance these natives were to us as border scouts, etc. in the late war [South African War].⁷⁴²

Despite such clear concerns, the Germans continued to import supplies from the Cape undercover, which had to be permitted by British authorities.⁷⁴³ British officials, therefore, were attempting to help the Germans as much as they could because by helping them, they could reduce unwanted German activity and the number of German troops in the region and thus send the message to Germany that they were dependent on 'British goodwill in Southwestern Africa.'⁷⁴⁴ Therefore, at the same time as being interested and entangled to the situation in GSWA, Britain was also deterred by it: the border trade could benefit the Cape in recovering and be of diplomatic importance for relations with Germany, but it could also cause a rebellion in British territory, as it angered the Africans.

In 1904 German Foreign Minister Baron von Richthofen enquired if it was possible to send supplies through British territory free of duty and in return offer duty-free trade for the British through GSWA. Initially, this offer was rejected, but a counteroffer where the Germans would connect Walvis Bay to the then under construction railways in GSWA, was accepted.⁷⁴⁵ Walvis Bay was key to Anglo-German relations relating to the war: it was the main harbour on the coast, and thus, a railway line, while being beneficial for the Germans, would also be welcomed by the British. This is proven, as the diplomatic negotiations on this matter soon developed to the question of German military access through Walvis Bay. Frank Lascelles, the British ambassador to Germany, believed that granting this access would prove to be counterproductive. He argued that 'any action of the kind on our part might have a dangerous effect upon the tribes in British territory. Their attitude towards us might be considerably modified if they had reason to suppose that we were in any way co-operating with the German Government against the Herero'.⁷⁴⁶

⁷⁴² TNA: FO 367/8: Confidential report, by [unknown], 17 January 1906, 2.

⁷⁴³ Dederig, 'War and Mobility', 283.

⁷⁴⁴ Ibid., 284.

⁷⁴⁵ TNA: FO 64/1645: Lascelles to Baron von Richthofen, 20 June 1904.

⁷⁴⁶ TNA: FO 64/1645: Lascelles to Foreign Office, 11 July 1904.

Therefore, British support for the Germans was an ambiguous case: they could use the war as leverage to acquire railroad connections to Walvis Bay and there was also a significant interest not only in aiding their European comrades but also in ending the war quickly, as fears persisted that it would spread into British territory, as will be discussed below. Therefore, the British continued to help the Germans by, for instance, reporting on the movement of rebels.⁷⁴⁷ Moreover, they also allowed the Germans to have stores in British territory holding weapons and ammunition, where German soldiers could sneak across the border without the Herero or Nama noticing. This way, they were kept resupplied on the frontline and their stores were spared from being raided.⁷⁴⁸

Another aspect of Anglo-German collaboration was that of volunteers from all over the British Empire who expressed their interest in joining the *Schutztruppe*. Indeed, this may have been out of an incitement of ‘white solidarity’ in the colonial world, as best illustrated by an article in *The Times* stating that ‘a natural bond links together white settlers, of whatever nationality, amid the teeming black population of the African continent.’⁷⁴⁹ Such sentiment may have been widespread, as the German consulate in Auckland, New Zealand reported on a group of veterans from the South African War who had made inquiries as to whether they could volunteer for service in GSWA.⁷⁵⁰ This is interesting from several perspectives: it not only shows the transnational, even global, networks of empires as interwoven and entangled entities, but also reveals the existence a colonial identity, not only regional but again globally. It was a case where British subjects, as far away as New Zealand, considered themselves suitable to join a German force in a colonial war. Thus, it gives indications to the racial solidarity between Europeans in subjugating non-Europeans throughout the globe. However, from the perspective of British and German officials, this issue was also one of suspicion and antagonism. Soon after the Herero rebellion had broken out, a British subject called N.R. Dawson appeared before the German Imperial Consulate in Cape Town and ‘offered to go with 200 volunteers to GSWA to fight against the insurgents.’ Bearing in mind that Dawson’s offer came at a time when the Herero had the upper hand in the war, it is perhaps surprising that the offer was turned down because ‘the Imperial Government does not need the support of a volunteer corps.’ Upon hearing this rejection, however, Dawson was reported to have replied that ‘if he was not allowed to fight on the German side, he

⁷⁴⁷ BAB: R 1001/2173: Kaiserliche Deutsche Konsulat, Cape Town to Bülow, 24 February 1904

⁷⁴⁸ Dederling, ‘War and Mobility’, 283.

⁷⁴⁹ *The Times*, 19 January 1904.

⁷⁵⁰ BAB: R 1001/2117: Report by German Consulate, Auckland, enclosed in Bülow to Auswärtiges Amt, Kolonial Abt., 2 December 1904.

would support the insurgents.⁷⁵¹ This, of course, led to German suspicions towards both the British and South African governments, but also toward British subjects in the region. Britain's friendly neutrality, therefore, was not a straightforward case of Britain seeking to assist Germany behind the scenes. It was a policy of walking on eggshells, fearing any spill-over effect from GSWA, whether it was in the shape of angering the Germans or the Africans within their own territory. Yet, Britain could not avoid being involved in terms of supplies and trade across the border, which forced the authorities to, in effect, choose a side.

The collaboration between Britain and Germany were not as straightforward as argued by both Drechsler and Michael Fröhlich, who claimed that it was a white imperialist coalition embedded in 'racial solidarity' against African resistance.⁷⁵² If there was such solidarity, it may have been in the shape of volunteers and not state actors in London or the Cape. Yet, as shown here, it cannot be simply labelled as an example of 'racial solidarity', since these volunteers may have joined and supported the African rebels when their offer was turned down. However, it is important to stress that this does not mean that Britain was completely reticent in assisting Germany in their colonial war; rather, they did so, but not by outright support in the shape of a policy directed from London. Instead, the collaboration with Germany during its colonial war was more ad hoc. Britain was willing to send supplies and trade, give information on movements etc., but this was limited and impromptu. Therefore, there was no direct policy decided by the British Government on how to act and collaborate with the Germans – or indeed the Africans. The rather chaotic, ambiguous and sometimes even contradictory issues that arose from the lack of a clear directive are perhaps best illustrated by the Marengo affair.

The Marengo Affair

Before the war, Jakob Marengo⁷⁵³ had worked in the O'kiep Cooper Mines in the northern part of the Cape Colony. With the rising of the Bondelswarts in 1903, however, he returned to GSWA and successfully led a band in the war against the Germans. In fact, his success was such that after the conclusion of peace with the Bondelswarts, the Germans still opted to brand him a brigand and an outlaw.⁷⁵⁴ Marengo, therefore, continued his struggle against

⁷⁵¹ BAB: R 1001/2113: Kaiserliche Deutsche Konsulat, Cape Town to Auswärtiges Amt, Kolonial Abt., 16 March 1904.

⁷⁵² Drechsler, *Let us Die Fighting*, 204 and Michael Fröhlich, *Von Konfrontation zur Koexistenz. Die deutsch-englischen Kolonialbeziehungen in Afrika zwischen 1884 und 1914* (Bochum, 1990), 266.

⁷⁵³ Sometimes also Morengo, Marenga or Morenga.

⁷⁵⁴ Drechsler, *Let us Die Fighting*, 179.

the Germans during the Herero war and thus preceded the later Nama rebellion. His guerrilla attacks upon the German troops were remarkably successful, and since he continuously crossed the border into British territory, the Germans were unable to capture him. According to Drechsler, Marengo's aim was to replace German colonial rule in GSWA with British.⁷⁵⁵ Nevertheless, even if Marengo held such intentions, it is only a sad irony that it was the British who eventually killed him.

Despite Marengo having used the border as a way to evade German forces as early as 1904, it was not until the very last stage of the rebellion that the Germans succeeded in acquiring the co-operation of the British. When Marengo crossed into British territory to evade German troops and received help from indigenous peoples across the border, D.H von Jacobs at the German consulate in British South Africa asked the British to intervene and prevent Marengo from getting support by arresting his allies.⁷⁵⁶ The South African government responded that it was 'prepared to do everything possible' to prevent Marengo's allies from assisting him from British territory and that it would 'issue instructions to the Police Authorities to prevent co-operation between the natives of this Colony and the rebellious tribes in German South West Africa; and further, that any armed natives from German South West Africa, if found in this colony, are to be taken into custody and disarmed.'⁷⁵⁷ Eventually, however, Marengo's cross-border resistance was subdued by the growing number of German troops, and after a skirmish at the beginning of May 1906, he gave himself up to the Cape authorities and was detained in Tokai Prison, far away from the border.⁷⁵⁸

The Anglo-German border in Southern Africa stretched for thousands of miles, rendering the Cape Mounted Police unable to cover the entire area. Therefore, Marengo kept receiving support and moving across the border. This is proven by a report from Trench on a German military memorandum lamenting the lack of British support.

The hostile Hottentots are strongly supported by the members of their clan beyond the frontier and obtain from thence ammunition, clothing and supplies. They are able by reinforcements from the Cape Colony to always make good their losses. The families and camps of the Hottentots are in safety on British ground.⁷⁵⁹

⁷⁵⁵ Ibid., 180.

⁷⁵⁶ TNA: FO 64/1645: D.H von Jacobs to Prime Minister Cape Town, 12 September 1904.

⁷⁵⁷ TNA: FO 64/1645: T.W. Smartt, Minute no. 1/511, Ministers to Administrators, 19 September 1904.

⁷⁵⁸ John Masson, 'A Fragment of Colonial History: The Killing of Jakob Marengo', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 21, 2 (1995), 250.

⁷⁵⁹ TNA: FO 367/11: Report by Trench, enclosed in Count JFC de Salis, British Embassy Berlin to Colonial Office, 29 November 1906.

The Germans were well aware of Marengo's movements across the border. In GSWA, Marengo operated from the Karrasberge in the south, where the rugged terrain not only suited his guerrilla tactics, but also allowed easy access across the border. Eventually, in order to prevent the 'cattle thieves' from crossing at liberty, troops were requested to be sent to the southern parts of GSWA.⁷⁶⁰ However, Marengo continued to evade capture and inflicted the Germans several losses.

In the beginning of May we received news that Captain Beeck had pursued the Hottentot-leader Morenga for five miles before English territory and the skirmish continued despite objections was raised by the English police. The Cape Government and the press took the affair rather calm; British Army Officers assured me that they would have acted similarly. A few days later the news from the British border police of Morenga crossing the border at Upton arrived.⁷⁶¹

German authorities were informed by British police about Marengo's movements and even received their sympathies despite having illegally crossed the border. Nevertheless, from a German perspective, the alleged lack of British collaboration on the border continued to hinder them in securing victory. Indeed, von Trotha had explained that 'a greater solidarity of action between the British and German authorities would be desirable', and this, he claimed, was also in the interest of the British, 'as all white men in South Africa should hold together against the natives.'⁷⁶²

On the one hand, the British agreed to this by detaining Marengo upon his surrender, but on the other, they refused to extradite him despite continuous Germans requests.⁷⁶³ The war in GSWA ended – officially – in late March 1907 and as such, there was no apparent reason for the British to keep Marengo in prison. Upon his release in June 1907, the Germans immediately expressed their concerns that Marengo would return to GSWA in order to re-instigate a rebellion in the south.⁷⁶⁴ Yet, 'the Government of the Cape Colony had no power to prevent Marengo, by force, from returning to GSWA.'⁷⁶⁵ Despite Cape officials informing the Germans that they found it unlikely that Marengo would cross the border – which he would, in fact, do soon – the Germans were infuriated by such direct lack of willingness to co-operate.

What followed reveals a chain of command within British colonial governance. Indeed, as the Cape authorities did not share the Germans' concern, the Germans therefore

⁷⁶⁰ BAB: R 1001/2084: Gezant Schmidt, Keetmanshop to Leutwein, 4 July 1904, enclosed in Leutwein to Auswärtiges Amt, Kolonial Abt., 29 July 1904.

⁷⁶¹ BAB: R 1001/2084: Kommandant Wilhelm Bertram, SMS Sperber to Seine Majestät der Kaiser, 26 June 1906.

⁷⁶² TNA: FO 64/1646: J.B. Whitehead to Lansdowne, 14 July 1905.

⁷⁶³ John Masson, *Jakob Marengo, an early Resistance Hero of Namibia* (Windhoek, 2001), 41-42.

⁷⁶⁴ Dederling, 'War and Mobility', 291.

⁷⁶⁵ TNA: FO 367/63: Governor to Secretary of State, 6 July 1907.

turned to the FO in London. The German ambassador in London, Count von Metternich, complained to Foreign Secretary Edward Grey, no later than the day after the above communication:

...as the Government of the Cape Colony feel bound to refuse Morenga's extradition, the Imperial Government would feel much obliged if, considering the grave situation, His Majesty's Government could see their way to take the immediate and necessary steps in the direction of removing the threatening danger.⁷⁶⁶

Grey, the great humanist during the Congo crisis, wasted no time in communicating to Lord Elgin in the CO, and requested that the matter be 'dealt with it at once' by having the Cape Government remove Marengo from the border: 'If they do not extradite him, they ought at any rate to see he does not stir up trouble.'⁷⁶⁷ Soon after, Elgin returned to Grey informing him that Hutchinson had reported that 'immediate action' was to be taken and that it was 'obligatory for the Cape Colony to render assistance.'⁷⁶⁸ This enabled Grey to finally let the Metternich and the German Government know that 'the Cape Government consider it the duty to render assistance' to Germany and that instructions had been given to bring in Marengo and send him away from the vicinity of the border and not to let him out of their sight.⁷⁶⁹

Having complained first to the Cape authorities without any success, and then to Whitehall with limited success, the Germans now tried to sway Britain's stance towards Marengo through another channel. While on holiday at Marienbad Spa in Bohemia, Kaiser Wilhelm II informed his uncle, King Edward VII, that he was worried that the conflict in GSWA would reignite should Marengo successfully cross the border. The Kaiser therefore pleaded that 'it is very desirable this dangerous rebellion should finally be quelled. Will your Government compel Cape Government to assist us?'⁷⁷⁰ Immediately British policy towards Marengo changed and Grey responded: 'Please inform His Majesty that in consequence of rumours respecting Marengo's movements, orders for his arrest has been issued.' Furthermore, Marengo was no longer to be granted asylum in British territory and would therefore be arrested or driven back into German territory.⁷⁷¹ Clearly, when the King became involved, the previous stance in which they were unable to prevent Marengo from going

⁷⁶⁶ TNA: FO 367/63: Count von Metternich to Sir. E. Grey, 7 August 1907.

⁷⁶⁷ TNA: FO 367/63: Grey to Elgin, [undated, stamped 9 August 1907].

⁷⁶⁸ TNA: FO 367/63: Hutchinson to Elgin, 8 August 1907, enclosed in CO to FO, 10 August 1907.

⁷⁶⁹ TNA: FO 367/63: Grey to Metternich, 9 August 1907.

⁷⁷⁰ TNA: FO 367/63: British Ambassador in Vienna, Sir E. Goschen to Grey, 16 August 1907.

⁷⁷¹ TNA: FO 367/63: Grey to Goschen, 17 August 1907.

back, was changed to a direct policy of kill or capture. To put it frankly, Edward VII, perhaps unwittingly, gave Marengo his *de facto* death sentence.

From the perspective of Whitehall, once King and Kaiser were involved there could be little incentive not to appease Germany over a matter as trivial as Marengo. Therefore, there was a change in policy towards Marengo in August 1907 when he crossed into GSWA. However, while this change may be seen in the context of local matters, the policy and eventual killing of Marengo should also be seen in a broader context. On 31 August 1907, Britain had signed the Anglo-Russian treaty, conventionally considered to be step towards the First World War, as it completed the encirclement of Germany through the British, French and Russian alliances. In such a fragile diplomatic climate, British actors may well have seen a convenient and cheap way to appease and reconcile with Germany by collaborating against Marengo. Indeed, Elgin made Hutchinson know that 'It would create bad impression if anything which takes place on British territory is responsible for a renewed outbreak.'⁷⁷² Nevertheless, Marengo had already crossed into GSWA and Grey therefore immediately had to apologise to Berlin, promising his full co-operation in the future.⁷⁷³

Upon crossing the border, however, Marengo was met with a German force that defeated him at Ukumas on 8 September 1907.⁷⁷⁴ The Germans kept the British well informed as to the operation and vice versa. Marengo eventually fled back into British territory, where the arrest warrant for him was still in place. Major Elliot of the Cape Mounted Police was sent out to seize Marengo and his small band (approximately twenty men and women) at Gamsebkloof. Elliot's approach to his orders of arresting Marengo was that 'I shall request Marengo to accompany me to Upington, failing which, provided position is not too strong, shall open fire.'⁷⁷⁵ Marengo was therefore seen as a major threat to both British and German colonial rule, as illustrated by a British newspaper that called him 'a South African Rob Roy.'⁷⁷⁶ Indeed, this stance of non-negotiation from the British may have arisen from the belief that 'a retreat on our part would be disastrous and would increase Marengo's prestige tenfold' and as such, that he could be an instigator of a regional cross-border uprising, particularly now when Britain had chosen its side.⁷⁷⁷ However, Elliot may

⁷⁷² TNA: FO 367/63: Elgin to Hutchinson, 14 August 1907, enclosed in CO to FO, 17 August 1907.

⁷⁷³ TNA: FO 367/63: Grey to Herr von Stumm, 16 August 1907.

⁷⁷⁴ TNA: FO 367/63: Hutchinson to Elgin, 10 September 1907.

⁷⁷⁵ TNA: FO 367/63: Elliot to Commissioner Commanding Cape Mounted Police, 19 July 1907, enclosed in Hutchinson to Elgin, 23 September 1907.

⁷⁷⁶ *Dundee Evening Telegraph*, 15 August 1907.

⁷⁷⁷ TNA: FO 367/63: Report by AHG Harvey in Major Elliot to The Commissioner Commanding Cape Mounted Police, 28 August 1907, enclosed in Elgin to Grey, 23 September 1907.

also have been tempted by the prize of 20,000 Marks which the Kaiser had put on Marengo's head.⁷⁷⁸

Marengo therefore had little choice; either continue to fight or surrender willingly and be handed over to the *Schutztruppe*, given Britain's newfound friendship with Germany on the matter. In a report dated 21 September 1907, Hutchinson informed Elgin that Elliot had killed Marengo and that there was 'no further fear of trouble.'⁷⁷⁹ The skirmish in which Marengo and his followers were killed was one of excessive violence: an estimated 5,000 bullets were fired at the cave in which they were hiding and the onslaught was of such severity that Elliot, in admitting the brutality of the affair, may have coined the term 'overkill'.⁷⁸⁰

When juxtaposing the Blue Book's description of this particular event with contemporary source material, the role and perceptions of the British in 1918 appear untrue. The Blue Book describes it as a lamentable exception, pitying 'that even one British bullet should have aided in that horrible outpouring of human blood.'⁷⁸¹ Another noteworthy perspective on this particular affair, from as late as 1916, was British historian and traveller Albert Calvert, who believed that Britain had merely assisted Germany in killing an outlaw. Instead, the killing of Marengo was for Calvert a moment of pride which 'fanned the jealousy of German officials' as Elliot received the Kaiser Medallie.⁷⁸² Of course, Calvert wrote in the context of the First World War, which had at that time not yet been concluded. His views therefore, do not, unlike the Blue Book, echo a diplomatic intention, but rather a jingoistic smear. Indicatively, he did not deride German colonialism for its violent methods, but for its failure to employ these methods efficiently.⁷⁸³

As Fröhlich has argued, the Marengo affair, seen from the metropole, was a case where intensive co-operation between the British and German governments succeeded.⁷⁸⁴ But it also revealed a formal link between the German and British military in Southern Africa which not only indicates that information and awareness of methods of oppression were shared, but also that the success of Anglo-German colonial collaboration was openly celebrated. Indeed, Hutchinson spared little time to communicate to Governor Lindequist in expressing his pleasure of the Anglo-German collaboration in killing Marengo and asking that he should convey his acknowledgement to Captain von Hagen who had assisted Major

⁷⁷⁸ Walter Nuhn, *Feind überall, Der Große Nama-Aufstand (Hottentottenaufstand) 1904-1908 in Deutsch-Südwestafrika (Namibia) – Der erste Partisanenkrieg in der Geschichte der deutschen Armee* (Bonn, 2000), 248.

⁷⁷⁹ TNA: FO 367/63: CO to FO, 21 September 1907, enclosed in Hutchinson to Elgin, 24 September 1907.

⁷⁸⁰ Masson, 'A Fragment of Colonial History', 255.

⁷⁸¹ Administrator's Office, 'Report on the Natives', 168.

⁷⁸² Albert Calvert, *South West Africa during the German occupation 1894-1914* (London, 1916), 32.

⁷⁸³ Calvert, *South West Africa*, 8. Also, Bomholt Nielsen, 'Selective Memory', 321-22.

⁷⁸⁴ Fröhlich, *Von Konfrontation zur Koexistenz*, 262-63.

Elliot.⁷⁸⁵ In London too, rejoicing over Anglo-German collaboration was evident. Indeed, Frank Lascelles reported to Grey in the FO after Marengo had been killed that the Cape's support in the Marengo affair had effectively 'won Germany's war', as the rebellion 'may now be considered completely quelled and the press have already proclaimed that now at any rate there is no possible reason to delay sending home the troops.'⁷⁸⁶

The Marengo affair remained at the crux of changing diplomatic relations between Britain and Germany: it was first celebrated, only to be excused when it revealed the intimate relationship between colonial powers in the face of indigenous resistance. The Marengo affair therefore serves as a microcosm of the intersections of colonial rivalry and collaboration: it reveals how Anglo-German collaboration was underpinned by broader foreign policy interests, colonial stakes and general anxieties. Indeed, co-operation was here deemed to be in the interest of both Whitehall and the Cape, as it could appease Germany and see the conflict in GSWA move closer to peace, which would promote further stability in the region. Nevertheless, the Marengo affair also reveals how the Cape was far more reluctant and disinterested in collaboration with Germany, possibly because they feared a backlash or spread of African resistance, which officials in Whitehall considered unimportant compared to relations with Germany.

On the whole, Britain's involvement in the conflict in GSWA suggests a degree of collaboration with Germany, in contrast to the otherwise prevailing notion of rivalry between the colonial powers. Yet it also showcases how collaboration was not the only feature, for it co-existed alongside antagonistic tendencies and actions that can best be understood from the premise of increasing rivalry. Marengo posed problems both for the colonial authorities seeking further stability and for the diplomatic situation in Europe, but still outright assistance to Germany was not given until it became too costly not to do so. Marengo had remained in the Cape for years and his extradition was consistently refused: it was only with the interference of the Kaiser that Britain sought to assist. Of course, this event, while celebrated prior to 1914, served as a case of hypocrisy for the moralistic arguments of the Blue Book, wherein Germany was to be depicted as the main culprit, with Britain being a bystander, not aware of nor participating in the conflict. The Marengo affair, therefore, was a stark contrast that illustrates the reality and contrast of pre-and post-war perceptions of German colonial rule and violence.

⁷⁸⁵ TNA: FO 367/63: Hutchinson to Governor of GSWA, 2 October 1907.

⁷⁸⁶ TNA: FO 367/63: Lascelles to Grey, 25 September 1907.

German Suspicions and British Anxieties

The Marengo affair illustrates the cross-border and trans-colonial aspect of colonial wars and their potential to impact other colonial powers. Indeed, the fear of a spill-over effect was perhaps the most prominent issue in the official mind when perceiving a war in a neighbouring colony. Therefore, in order to fully comprehend how British officials perceived German colonial rule and warfare, it is important to ascertain what they actually believed was at stake. In other words, what scenarios, fears and possibilities arose from the conflict in a neighbouring colony?

From the British perspective, there were, in general, three geopolitical concerns which originated from the conflict in GSWA. The first issue was that of the rebellion spreading into British territory, particularly from the southern parts of GSWA where the Nama were waging cross-border resistance. The second issue was that of a potential invasion should Britain and Germany find themselves embroiled in a war. The last and perhaps the most crucial issue for British officials was the potential of a new Boer conflict emerging with assistance from Germany.

The concern about the Nama rebellion spreading into British territory was perhaps one which was not unique to the war in GSWA. Indeed, it can be argued that whenever a 'native uprising' occurred, the supposedly savage races were igniting a racial war. Again, Fröhlich and Drechsler's contention of a 'racial solidarity' as a core factor in defining Anglo-German collaboration is relevant. However, this is one-dimensional, as there were perhaps plenty of suggestions of 'racial solidarity' from the German aspect, but fewer from the British – at least in official circles. For instance, a German settler wrote in the Cape Times how the Germans were 'proud to have fought shoulder to shoulder with Englishmen against Zulu, Basuto and Matabele'.⁷⁸⁷ However, as the Herero and Nama both had spared British and Boers, only targeting German men, it indicates that they were well aware of the ramifications it would otherwise have. In this sense, the notion of 'racial solidarity' was not reciprocal, as the Herero and Nama were aware of how to utilise the tensions and relations between the Europeans, by only targeting one group: German men. Instead, many British officials and commentators often claimed, that the indigenous peoples of GSWA had always wished to be under British rule.⁷⁸⁸ Many Herero and Nama leaders – including Marengo and Maherero, as we have seen – often proclaimed that they were attempting to replace German 'protection'

⁷⁸⁷ BAB: R 1001/2114: Excerpt of Cape Times, 23 April 1904 enclosed in Lindequist to Bülow, 26 April 1904.

⁷⁸⁸ See, for instance, the previously discussed relations between Cleverly and Witbooi.

with British. Hendrik Witbooi of the Nama, for instance, had written to the British regarding rumours that SWA was to be governed by Germany in the wake of the Berlin conference and pleaded for British takeover instead.⁷⁸⁹ For the Herero, many chiefs had petitioned British representatives in the Cape Colony for formal protection as early as the 1870s.⁷⁹⁰ Unsurprisingly, this perception was carried on into the Blue Book in 1918 and created a crucial argument representing the wishes of the Africans, giving legitimacy to the South African invasion in 1915 and the creation of the mandate in 1920.⁷⁹¹

Among British officials, particularly the men-on-the-spot, outright assistance to the Germans against Africans of whom many had helped them before, was ill-perceived. This was not only due to a sense of loyalty towards these 'friendly natives', but was also because of the potential ramifications it would have, should Britain betray them.⁷⁹² The British, therefore, were not willing to completely render open assistance to Germany, despite being sympathetic. Therefore, when the Germans continued to press for further collaboration, such as pursuing escapees over the border, it was refused, as Cape authorities believed they had been sufficiently helpful 'in spite of the fact that the rebels fighting against the German troops belong to the same tribes and are member of the families of the Cape Colonial Hottentots and Damaras.'⁷⁹³

British collaboration with Germany was therefore ambiguous and contradictory. They willingly supported them in fighting the Herero and Nama, but at the same time, were often reluctant to do so. Dederling argues that Germany consistently pressed the Cape authorities for logistical and police support, but despite collaboration in many other incidents, they did not always get it.⁷⁹⁴ Conversely, Lindner suggests that Britain explicitly supported the Germans as part of an Anglo-German 'colonial project' in the region.⁷⁹⁵ As shown with the Marengo affair, Britain and the Cape did indeed support Germany in its colonial war, albeit for different reasons and standpoints. Formal military links across the border, the exchange of information and supplies and the volunteers joining the *Schutztruppe* all remain clear cases of direct support and sympathy from a British perspective. But at the same time, the argument of non-collaboration as made by Dederling is substantiated by the anxiety of British officials that collaboration could cause the conflict to spread into the Cape

⁷⁸⁹ Gewald, *Herero Heroes*, 54.

⁷⁹⁰ Ibid., 232.

⁷⁹¹ Twomey, 'Atrocity Narratives', 217-18.

⁷⁹² TNA: FO 367/27: Report by H.V. Eason to Resident Commissioner, Mafeking, Ralph Williams, 14 February 1906, enclosed in Selborne to Elgin, 14 May 1906.

⁷⁹³ TNA: FO 367/27: Hutchinson to Elgin, 23 May 1896.

⁷⁹⁴ Dederling, 'The Ferreira Raid', 46.

⁷⁹⁵ Lindner, *Koloniale Begegnungen*, 458.

and Bechuanaland.⁷⁹⁶ Indeed, if they were caught helping the Germans in their genocidal affairs, they would antagonise not only the Nama rebels in GSWA but also their related clans residing within British territory.⁷⁹⁷

British policy vis-à-vis GSWA was therefore contradictory in its premise: on the one hand, they feared the ramifications of supportive actions towards the German cause, and on the other, they were willing to lend vital support. Indeed, this reveals the irrationality of British officials at the time: there was no clear-cut policy as to how to act regarding GSWA, but instead a much more circumstantial and therefore anxious perception of what was unfolding across the border. A memorandum by Hutchinson is indicative:

Putting it shortly, Ministers have been anxious to avoid: (i) irritating the natives in German South West Africa; (ii) alienating our own natives on this side of the border; (iii) unduly hampering the German authorities; (iv) unnecessary expense in guarding the frontier whilst the German Consul General has been doing all he can to use the Cape Colony as a base of operations against the natives – the very thing which Ministers consider ought not to be allowed. The result has been a considerable amount of friction between the German Consul General and Ministers.⁷⁹⁸

Although they had allowed the Germans to store weapons in British territory, the British were not willing to allow the Germans using British territory as a base of operations. This would be an apparent breach of sovereignty and would openly reveal to the Nama that Britain was just as much an enemy as the Germans. Indeed, there was a belief among British officials that it was vital to prevent Germans from crossing the border when pursuing rebels. The Acting Resident Commissioner in Mafeking, F.W. Panzera, was particularly alarmed by the possibility of provoking the Batawana tribe, who ‘have the greatest hatred for the Germans and were any of their men to cross the border it would probably mean that the natives here would retaliate at once and that would be a much more serious thing for the Germans than the little affair they have on in their own territory.’⁷⁹⁹

Panzera’s concerns are indicative of the cross-border anxieties of British officials. The fears of a spill-over effect in which the entanglement of the African peoples themselves would eventually cause an uprising in British territory because of German vices, therefore affected overall perceptions of the situation in GSWA. Thus, the contradictory stance of being caught between willing support for Germany and anxiety that this would cause grievances among indigenous peoples in the Cape persisted as an underlying element upon which British border policy was made. Perhaps the best indication hereof was when an

⁷⁹⁶ Fröhlich, *Von Konfrontation zur Koexistenz*, 240–41.

⁷⁹⁷ BAB: R 1001/2117: Bericht, Oberleutnant von Beesten, [undated] November, 1904.

⁷⁹⁸ Secret Report by Hutchinson to Lyttelton, 25 February 1905, cited in Dederling, ‘The Ferreira Raid’, 47.

⁷⁹⁹ TNA: FO 64/1645: Panzera to High Commissioner, 8 June 1904.

official at the British embassy in Berlin reported on a German newspaper, the *Lokale Anzeiger*, which described a conversation between Consul Nettelbladt and Jameson (by then Prime Minister in the Cape). Here it was reported that Jameson had ‘declared the sympathies of the Cape Government were entirely with the Germans, and though, on account of the native policy of that Government, they could not declare their sympathies too openly, the Germans might count on their moral support and as far as possible their practical assistance.’⁸⁰⁰

Britain, therefore, sought not to antagonise the Nama, the Herero or the Germans. While they were sympathetic to the German cause, they could not take open policies and actions. The fear of antagonising the Germans, however, was based upon the growing number of troops arriving in GSWA, paired with continuous German suspicions of Britain being Janus-faced: pretending to support Germany, but in reality supporting the Herero and Nama with arms and supplies. Furthermore, German authorities, especially in Berlin, were monitoring the British press and often expressed concerns that they felt the Cape newspapers, despite their relatively little attention to the affair, were creating a smear campaign against them.⁸⁰¹ In fact, these concerns were so strong that Consul Humboldt at several instances took action and considered the authenticity of various articles. This was not merely a response to the supposed smear campaign, but rather served to scrutinise whether suggestions of smuggling of supplies across the border to the rebels were accurate.⁸⁰² In fact, Trench reported on the sentiment among German officers and the German press, that there was a broad conviction that the ‘unneighbourly conduct of Great Britain’ had worsened the conflict.⁸⁰³ German suspicions were not only restricted to the media. From the very outset of the rebellion, there had been clear suspicions that Britain or British agents had played some part or other in instigating the rebellion and prompting the Herero and Nama to rebel.⁸⁰⁴ According to Commander Gudewill on the German ship SMS Habicht, there had from the beginning been ‘rumours in the land that the natives were incited, organised and supplied with weapons and ammunition by Englishmen and it is a fact that the purposeful rising of the Herero is directed and helped with large quantities of war material.’⁸⁰⁵

Therefore, Anglo-German relations at the outbreak of the rebellion were to an extent also antagonistic and embedded in suspicions of one another’s intentions and actions, thus indicating that Britain’s involvement was not exclusively one of collaboration or ‘racial

⁸⁰⁰ TNA: FO 63/1646: J.B. Whitehead to Lansdowne, 25 August 1905.

⁸⁰¹ BAB: R 1001/2112: Kaiserliche Deutsche Botschaft, London to Bülow, 1 March 1904.

⁸⁰² BAB: R 1001/2084: Lindequist to Auswärtiges Amt, Kolonial Abt., 3 August 1906.

⁸⁰³ TNA: FO 367/8: Report by FJA Trench, 19 January 1906

⁸⁰⁴ BAB: R 1001/2113: Kaiserliche Deutsche Botschaft, London to Bülow, 18 March 1904.

⁸⁰⁵ BAB: R 1001/2114: Kommandant Gudewill, SMS Habicht to Seine Majestät der Kaiser, 26 February 1904.

solidarity.’ The Germans suspected British agents and support to the Herero and later the Nama, and the British, at least the officials, feared that the conflict would in one way or another include them, particularly due to the considerable military strength and operations of the Germans. Indeed, British officials were aware of, and alarmed by, the disproportionate number of approximately 15,000 troops against a few hundred Nama in the south – in fact, the number of soldiers soon exceeded the number of settlers in GSWA.⁸⁰⁶ The anxiety about a German invasion was, however, a rationally-deduced threat, as the British colonial administration in South Africa was still fragile and recovering from its wounds from the South African War.⁸⁰⁷ Furthermore, when a substantial number of Boers, many of whom were veterans of the recent war, crossed the border and volunteered to join the *Schutztruppe*, anxiety grew.⁸⁰⁸

In 1905, Selborne voiced his concerns over the growing number of German forces in the region. Not only did he fear that the 15,000 German soldiers would soon be increased to 30,000: he also reported that among these, the Germans had ‘recruited between three and four thousand Boers, and are recruiting still.’ This, Selborne warned, would put Germany ‘in a position to squeeze us.’⁸⁰⁹ However, in spite of such warnings, Lyttelton replied calmly that:

It would appear that the large number of German troops is due to a policy of crushing rebels by main force. For his part, Hutchinson [Walter Hely-Hutchinson], says that he personally believe the most ‘disquieting feature in the matter’ is the recruitment of Boers in German service.⁸¹⁰

British officials, therefore, were overwhelmingly concerned by the presence of a large German force on their colonial doorstep and outright alarmed by the possibility of a Boer rebellion emerging from the situation in GSWA while doing little more than raising an eyebrow to the brutal warfare which was the reason for such a large German force in the first place. Not only does this correspondence between highly-placed officials in the metropole and colonies display a certain hierarchy of British interests and concerns, it also proves that they were well aware of and rather unconcerned by the brutalities inflicted upon the indigenous peoples of GSWA.⁸¹¹

British newspapers and officials were therefore following the developments in GSWA carefully. In fact, von Lindequist while he was still Consul, often wired information

⁸⁰⁶ Olusoga and Erichsen, *Kaiser’s Holocaust*, 141-42.

⁸⁰⁷ Dederig, ‘The Ferreira Raid’, 46.

⁸⁰⁸ TNA: FO 64/1646: Report, 25 March 1905, enclosed in Hutchinson to Lyttelton, 11 April 1905.

⁸⁰⁹ TNA: FO 64/1646: Selborne to Lyttelton, 24 May 1905.

⁸¹⁰ TNA: FO 64/1646: Lyttelton to Selborne, 6 May 1905.

⁸¹¹ Bomholt Nielsen, ‘Selective Memory’, 324.

from Cape newspapers back to the *Reichskolonialamt*, not only to keep them updated on the ongoing affairs in GSWA, but also to let them know how their conduct was seen by others in an international light.⁸¹² This once again witnesses the entanglement of Anglo-German colonial rule in Southern Africa: both parties were deeply interested in, and even had stakes in, each other's affairs. Indicatively, Lindequist even used the reports of British newspapers to inform Berlin on the movement of the rebels.⁸¹³ Clearly, British officials were well aware of the atrocities that occurred, perhaps even more so than their colleagues in Berlin, which may be due to the larger setup of the British CO as well as the communications in the Cape being more substantial than in GSWA. However, in the face of such evidence, the Blue Book's condemnation of German atrocities in GSWA are rendered devious, because at the time, British officials were far more interested in other concerns and were anxious about the mere speculation that Germany would invade or support a new Boer uprising.⁸¹⁴

The anxieties about a German invasion, particularly if Britain and Germany should find themselves embroiled in a war in Europe, became a topic of intense discussion internally between British officials in London, South Africa and Berlin. According to the Military Attaché to the British embassy in Berlin, Lord Edward Gleichen who had participated in several colonial wars, including the Southern African campaign in 1899, there was no real German threat in South Africa. Due to Germany's insufficient naval presence in the region, encumbered by the 'miserable' harbours at Lüderitz and Swakopmund, which offered 'no facilities for disembarkation', Germany would be unable to send enough reinforcements.⁸¹⁵ On the alleged 15,000 troops about which Selborne had voiced his grave concerns, Gleichen equally believed that this was 'barely sufficient to secure total victory in GSWA itself. They have too much trouble with the guerrilla war – no need to worry.'⁸¹⁶

Soon, the anxiety for a direct German invasion of the Cape was deemed improbable, due to the continuous failure of the *Schutztruppe* to secure victory.⁸¹⁷ Indeed, Gleichen reported on this matter that:

In face of the pitying and somewhat contemptuous comments which are so noticeable in the German press and in the remarks of one's friends on the occasion of any 'regrettable incident' in our own numerous colonial enterprises, it is difficult to avoid feeling a certain amount of 'Schadenfreude' on learning the misfortunes of the superior people.⁸¹⁸

⁸¹² BAB: R 1001/2114: Lindequist to Bülow, 4 May 1904.

⁸¹³ BAB: R 1001/2115: Lindequist to Bülow, 25 May 1904.

⁸¹⁴ Bomholt Nielsen, 'Selective Memory', 324.

⁸¹⁵ TNA: FO 64/1645: Report by von Gleichen, enclosed in Lascelles to Lansdowne, 9 April 1904, 1-2.

⁸¹⁶ TNA: FO 64/1646: Chancellor Whitehead to Lascelles, 13 June 1905.

⁸¹⁷ Dederling, 'The Ferreira Raid', 50-51.

⁸¹⁸ TNA: 64/1645: Report by Gleichen, enclosed in Lascelles to Lansdowne, 9 April 1904, 2.

Obviously aimed to mock the Germans, who during the South African War had vocally sympathised with the Boers and mocked the British, this reveals a certain rivalry in terms of prestige when it came to colonial warfare. Therefore, while the threat of a German invasion steadily faded as a possible scenario in the minds of British officials, the attention to the conduct of the Germans persisted, especially since reports claimed that ‘the feeling between the races [Germans and indigenous peoples] is so bitter that further atrocities, perhaps on both sides, seem probable.’⁸¹⁹ Nevertheless, fears of Germany being a threat to British sovereignty in Southern Africa did not occur in a vacuum. An example of the ongoing Anglo-German rivalry in the region is the aforementioned Kruger Telegram and such vocal support for Kruger spawned great resentment in Britain.

Germany’s interest and role in the growing Anglo-Boer antagonism prior to 1899 has often been dismissed as being a product of British paranoia where Germany simply attempted to exploit the situation to its advantage and pressure Britain in European politics, but as Matthew Seligmann has observed, Germany’s colonial ambitions in Southern Africa at the time should not be obscured.⁸²⁰ Germany’s support for the Boers during the South African War, therefore, may well have been clear in the memory of British and South African officials in 1904.

During the South African War, there were strong suspicions by British officials that GSWA was used as a source for supplies of weapons and ammunition for the Boers. As the British discovered that the Boers were armed with Mauser rifles⁸²¹ – a German brand – they began to suspect that they were being smuggled over the GSWA border, just as the Germans in 1904 suspected the British of supplying the Herero and Nama. From the British viewpoint during the South African War, however, German ‘antipathy towards England, especially in this war’ sustained reasons to monitor GSWA because it was believed to be the only possible place where arms and ammunition could reach the Boer commandos in late 1901.⁸²² Furthermore, much similar to how Germany suspected the Herero and Nama of jumping borders in 1904-7, British officials during the South African War believed that ‘rebels cross and re-cross the boundary at their pleasure’ and in some cases ‘Germans have joined them.’⁸²³

⁸¹⁹ Ibid., 6.

⁸²⁰ Seligmann, *Rivalry in Southern Africa*, 63-65.

⁸²¹ Piers Brendon, *The Decline and Fall of the British Empire, 1781-1997* (New York, 2008), 197-98.

⁸²² TNA: FO 2/904: D. Wessels to T.W. Smartt, in T.W. Smartt to Hutchinson 29 October 1901, enclosed in Hutchinson to Chamberlain, 30 October 1901.

⁸²³ TNA: FO 2/904: Report by W. M Eustace, 20 October 1901, enclosed in Hutchinson to Chamberlain, 5 November 1901.

While it was generally believed that the Boers were the Teutonic ‘blood-brothers’ of the Germans, it remains clear that Germany’s stance during the war was ambiguous. It was not willing to risk an international diplomatic crisis with Britain, as shown, for instance, by the Kaiser refusing to welcome President Kruger upon his visit to Germany in 1900.⁸²⁴ On a more local level, Germany became involved in the affairs of the war. In Walvis Bay, the small enclave on the GSWA coast, an unnamed German official warned the Magistrate that Boer commandos who had fled into German territory threatened to raid the settlement.⁸²⁵ Soon diplomatic contacts to Germany was set in motion and the British were assured that ‘German authorities would do everything in their power to prevent an incursion of Boers from German into English territory.’⁸²⁶ Nevertheless, reinforcements, including fifty volunteers and two machine guns, were sent to Walvis Bay, which was undertaking the construction of defensive structures.⁸²⁷ While the British remained anxious, news soon broke that the raid was not going to happen, as German authorities in Swakopmund had refused to sell weapons and ammunition to the Boers.⁸²⁸ The fear of Boer movements originating in GSWA was therefore prevalent before the outbreak of the Herero-Nama rebellion. British regional paranoia, therefore, seems to be continuous from the South African War and through the Herero-Nama rebellion.

In light of such cross-border activities and subsequent British paranoia, it is evident that British officials considered the quelling of the Herero and Nama to be not only a pretext for a German invasion, but more probably a pretext to re-arm and mobilise Boer irregulars. While many Boer volunteers were officially recruited by the Germans as transport riders and scouts, British officials feared that many of these were *bittereinders* – veteran Boers fighting ‘to the bitter end’ during the recent war – would make an incursion into the Northern Cape where British rule was resented.⁸²⁹ Indeed, such an incursion materialised with the 1906 ‘Ferreira Raid’, but before then, in 1905, British officials had already reason to believe that the Boers and Germans were plotting to undermine British sovereignty. In a secret military report, it was asserted that Boer leaders were ‘relying on certain German promises of assistance in case of rebellion.’ However, because the war with the Herero and Nama was dragging out to ‘proportions which the Germans never dreamt’, German authorities found

⁸²⁴ Dederling, ‘The Ferreira Raid’, 45.

⁸²⁵ TNA: FO 2/904: Milner to Chamberlain, 7 February 1900, 1.

⁸²⁶ TNA: FO 2/904: Lascelles to CO, 10 February 1900, 8.

⁸²⁷ TNA: FO 2/904: Chamberlain to Milner, 19 February 1900, 13.

⁸²⁸ TNA: FO 2/904: Cleverly to the Cape Government, 1 March 1900, 22.

⁸²⁹ Dederling, ‘The Ferreira Raid’, 49-50.

it necessary to seek a 'temporary friendship' with Britain if they were to emerge from the war as victors.⁸³⁰

Fears of an actual German-supported Boer raid or invasion, however, did not emerge directly out of the context of the Herero-Nama war. Such anxieties were already existent during the South African War, where the British were aware that Boer ex-combatants had been allowed to acquire land in GSWA. Instead of taking direct diplomatic contact on this issue, however, ambassador Lascelles was instructed to 'unofficially' let the German government 'have no doubt that every proper precaution will be taken to prevent Boer refugees using the application for land as a blind under the cover of which to prepare to attack us from German territory.'⁸³¹ Thus, Lascelles was instructed to remind Germany to 'at once take whatever steps necessary to prevent a breach of neutrality.'⁸³²

Lascelles spent little time in fulfilling his task. Upon a private visit to him, von Richthofen, stated that 'German Authorities would certainly take care to prevent any grants of land made to the Boers being used as a blind under cover of which to attack British possession from German territory.'⁸³³ Britain was therefore assured – diplomatically from Berlin – of the co-operation of the Germans, just as officials in London would during the Herero-Nama rebellion a few years later, as witnessed by the Marengo affair. These diplomatic missions should have satisfied British officials, but the suspicions in the latter stages of the South African War gave birth to a longer-standing fear of a militant Boer presence on Britain's colonial doorstep. The situation was therefore ambiguous for British officials: on the one hand the Germans were feared to be plotting against them and on the other hand, they knew that Germany could not afford to alienate Britain.

Despite the apparent German dependence upon British co-operation and friendship, British fears of a spill-over effect continued to persist. Upon interviewing Stephane Kock, brother to former Boer General Johannes Kock, who was a central figure in the South African War, British officials found ever more reason to trust their fears. Kock explicitly stated that the purpose of recruiting Boers in German service was 'to take men to GSWA nominally to assist German transports, but really to be armed and ready to proceed to the Transvaal when the general rising took place.' This rising, he claimed, was to have taken place in the summer of 1905, but was postponed because of the war in GSWA seeing no end,

⁸³⁰ TNA: FO 64/1646: Secret Report, Military Intelligence Department, enclosed in Hutchinson to Lyttelton, 21 June 1905.

⁸³¹ TNA: FO 2/904: FO to CO, 31 April 1901.

⁸³² TNA: FO 2/904: FO to Lascelles, 21 May 1901.

⁸³³ TNA: FO 2/904: Lascelles to Lansdowne, 29 May 1901.

leaving Boer volunteers restless and dissatisfied.⁸³⁴ It remains unknown, however, whether John Ferreira and his men, numbering about fifty, were attempting to realise Kock's statements of a 'general rising' when they set out to raid British territory from GSWA in early November 1906. Before abandoning the *Schutztruppe*, they stole arms, ammunition, horses and even khaki uniforms from a lager. Upon reaching British territory, they attempted to recruit farmers to their side, either by force, or with false rumours that a war between Britain and Germany had broken out and a general rising in the Cape was already underway.⁸³⁵

Dr. Leander Starr Jameson, now Prime Minister to the Cape, sought to make sure that this rather small incursion did not develop into a full-blown rebellion by having Jan Hofmeyr of the *Afrikaner Bond* publish a notice in their newspaper, *Ons Land*, that the Ferreira raid must be 'immediately stopped.' Furthermore, a police force was soon sent north. On 14 November 1906, a mere eight days after the incursion, the forces met in a rather chaotic skirmish where Ferreira and his men eventually surrendered.⁸³⁶ Although the raid was short-lived, unsuccessful and, as such, unimportant, Winston Churchill, then Under-Secretary in the CO, still had to present the events to the House of Parliaments and describe the actions of the government, including communications to the German administration in GSWA to take precautions and uphold the 'freelooters' should they return.⁸³⁷

Consequently, the German authorities, at least officially, co-operated and disarmed their Boer volunteers in GSWA.⁸³⁸ In the Cape, however, similarities were soon drawn to the Jameson Raid in 1895 and Boer nationalists demanded that Ferreira and his men be treated like Kruger had treated Jameson – thus sparing his life. Therefore, when a death sentence was initially passed, Hutchinson was quick to have the sentence commuted so that Ferreira and his men did not become martyrs.⁸³⁹ According to Dederling, there is no documentation to prove that the Germans had any involvement in the raid. However, he believes that there was an 'atmosphere' in which Boer volunteers believed they had the 'silent approval' of the Germans.⁸⁴⁰ Considering the above source about Johannes Kock, evidence is provided to sustain such conclusion, although its accuracy is somewhat questionable, as there is a chance that Kock merely sought to frighten his British interviewers. However, the Germans did use Boers in their operations: Manie Maritz, who had both fought in the South African War and

⁸³⁴ TNA: FO 64/1646: Secret Report, Military Intelligence Department, enclosed in Hutchinson to Lyttelton, 5 July 1905, 1-2. Also discussed in Bomholt Nielsen, 'Selective Memory', 325.

⁸³⁵ Dederling, 'The Ferreira Raid', 53-54.

⁸³⁶ *Ibid.*, 56.

⁸³⁷ Hansard Millbank, vol.164 cc1054: House of Commons, The Boer Raid, 12 November 1906.

⁸³⁸ Dederling, 'The Ferreira Raid', 53.

⁸³⁹ *Ibid.*, 57.

⁸⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 52.

led the rising in 1914, for instance, was responsible for transporting supplies and recruiting Boers in British territory.⁸⁴¹

The key issue here is not whether the Germans actually supported and planned a Boer rising during the Herero-Nama war, but rather, the suspicions of British official actors in those years. These suspicions were strong: earlier support from Germany during the South African War, the unbalanced number of troops stationed in GSWA, the recruitment of Boers and, in the end, the Ferreira Raid, seem rational reasons for them to be anxious. However, as the war in GSWA dragged out, they feared this to be a longstanding smokescreen in order to cover imports of weapons and ammunition for a coming war with Britain where the supply lines between GSWA and Germany would be severed by British naval dominance.⁸⁴² At the same time, and in contradiction, the war with the Herero and Nama assured British actors that Germany was not ready for a regional war, and thus, it could counterfactually be argued that a potential Third South African War was avoided due to the success of the Herero and Nama in dragging out the conflict, leaving Boer volunteers frustrated, as illustrated in the Kock source. Indeed, as late as 1907, Selborne complained to Elgin that Germany continued to seek and subvert British sovereignty and foster a Boer rising:

It is obviously the opinion of the German Emperor that all possibility of a Boer rising has not ceased to exist, and in case of any friction between the United Kingdom and the German Empire he wishes to have at his hand an instrument for promoting a Boer rebellion. This he would endeavour to do by the actual support of his troops and by supplying the rebels with arms and ammunition from the great depots he will maintain in his own territory.⁸⁴³

The fear of a Boer rising emerging from the chaos in GSWA was perhaps one of the reasons why the British government sought rapprochement with the Boers in 1907 where Botha was instructed to form a government in the Transvaal, as had initially been agreed in the Treaty of Vereeniging (1902).⁸⁴⁴ Furthermore, in 1907, a conference on South African colonial administration reiterated the importance of ‘an inter-colonial defence scheme for the better protection of the British South African Colonies.’ In 1907, Germany would be the only potential foe in Southern Africa for the British, either as a faction itself or through its links with Boer nationalists. Although this remains speculative, such concerns as those spawned from the presence of the *Schutztruppe* in GSWA and the number of Boer volunteers may therefore have played a role in the creation of the South African Union in 1910.⁸⁴⁵

⁸⁴¹ BAB: R1001/2115: Lindequist to Auswärtiges Amt, Kolonial Abt., 13 July 1904.

⁸⁴² Dederling, ‘The Ferreira Raid’, 50.

⁸⁴³ TNA: FO 367/136: Selborne to Elgin, 25 February 1907 and Dederling, ‘War and Mobility’, 278, ff. 51.

⁸⁴⁴ TNA: CO 291/114: Botha to Chairman of the Constitution Committee, Sir J. Ridgeway, 2 June 1906.

⁸⁴⁵ TNA: FO 367/136: Selborne to Elgin, 4 February 1907.

British officials therefore sought to uphold their ambiguous friendly neutrality in order to make sure they antagonised neither Germans nor Boers, and in the process, ignored or overlooked the treatment of the Herero and Nama, who, in turn, would be antagonised and perhaps cause the rising to spread if the British were openly supporting the Germans. Therefore, they were in a delicate situation where the slightest action – or inaction – would cause the Herero-Nama rebellion to ignite a chain of events that could end in a general African uprising spanning the entirety of Southern Africa, a German invasion, a Boer rising, or perhaps all three scenarios at once. Consequently, Britain's involvement in the treatment of the Herero and Nama – whether or not they were active in the rebellion against Germany – became intrinsic in their stance on the affair in GSWA. The flow of refugees, which increased immensely after the battle of Waterberg, only brought this matter straight to Britain's colonial doorstep, forcing them to take direct action.⁸⁴⁶

British Refugee and Border Policies

British border policies during the war in GSWA were embedded in the same complexities as described above, seeking to antagonise neither Germans nor indigenous groups. The borderlands comprised contested boundaries between colonial domains in which indigenous actors could challenge and subvert hegemony.⁸⁴⁷ Therefore, when refugees from the atrocities in GSWA crossed the British border, they revealed fragilities in Anglo-German colonial hegemony, as it necessitated a political and administrative reaction by the British, thus forcing them to actively participate in the situation in GSWA. Indeed, as Dederling has claimed, 'indigenous mobility inhibited the consolidation of colonial hegemony and subverted the self-confidence of colonial rulers.'⁸⁴⁸ At the same time, however, aiding the Germans to prevail could, as shown, antagonise their own colonial subjects, thus potentially causing the very same threat to colonial hegemony.

Many of the refugees were the survivors of a lengthy escape through the Omaheke desert as a consequence of Trotha's military strategy of first pursuing the Herero into the desert and then guarding the desert's borders, preventing them from returning into GSWA. Although many Herero did cross back into GSWA, the other options were simply to stay and die of thirst and hunger in the desert or try and make it to the British Bechuanaland or

⁸⁴⁶ Lindner, *Koloniale Begegnungen*, 255.

⁸⁴⁷ Dederling, 'War and Mobility', 275-76.

⁸⁴⁸ Ibid., 276.

the Cape border. A British border policy pertaining to the war had already been imposed with the Bondelswarts rebellion in 1903, where the British administration allowed refugees to cross but refused to hand anyone over to the German authorities.⁸⁴⁹ In December 1903 a clear policy regarding refugees was made. The refugees were to be allowed crossing without hindrance but were to be taken into custody and disarmed. Any goods and stock deemed to have been stolen were to be returned to GSWA, but most importantly, the refugees were to be informed immediately that they would not be sent back against their will. The refugees, now being in British territory, would 'receive the protection of the Government', but anyone who 'cannot make satisfactory arrangements for their own subsistence' was expected to perform 'reasonable services as the Government may require.'⁸⁵⁰

The issue of refugee and border policy originated from the affair surrounding the South African War, as described above, which then diffused into the situation in 1904. Indeed, as the British had suspected the Germans of supporting Boers from GSWA territory, the Germans now suspected the British of allowing the Herero and Nama rebels to establish hideouts in British territory. Already in 1904, before the decisive battle at Waterberg, the German authorities had contacted the British to warn them of the rebels crossing the border from Hereroland. The initial steps taken by the British were to establish a border control where refugees were interned in camps and goods deemed stolen were returned to GSWA. From the German perspective, however, this policy was far too lenient and would therefore soon cause the Herero to 'come into conflict with the Laws of England' because of their 'reputation as rustlers.' The Germans' own border policy around the Omaheke and in the south was to set up bases from which they could operate, attempting to prevent the Herero from crossing.⁸⁵¹ In southern GSWA, for instance, the town of Keetmanshoop was used as a base from which German troops would gather Herero prisoners, including women and children (as well as cattle), before these were eventually sent to concentration camps. In a response to German movements near the border, the British authorities insisted on maintaining total sovereignty over the territory and borderlands: with few exceptions they did not allow German troops to cross and pursue rebels; nor did they allow them to fire across the border, and most notably, they recognised the rights of the refugees as 'political refugees', rendering them under British protection.⁸⁵² This did not occur in a vacuum, for

⁸⁴⁹ TNA: FO 64/1645: Hutchinson to Lyttelton, 18 November 1903.

⁸⁵⁰ TNA: WO 106/265: Report on Native Refugees from German Territory, T. Lynedoch Graham, Attorney General's Office, Cape Town, 18 November 1903, enclosure no.3 in Hutchinson to Lyttelton, 5 December 1903.

⁸⁵¹ BAB: R 1001/2084: Gezant Schmidt, Keetmanshop to Leutwein, 4 July 1904, enclosed in Leutwein to Auswärtiges Amt, Kolonial Abt., 29 July 1904.

⁸⁵² TNA: FO 64/1645: Smartt, Minute no.1/511, Ministers to Administrators, 19 September 1904.

during the South African War, many Boer commandos had crossed into GSWA and were protected by the Germans as 'political refugees'.⁸⁵³ Possibly, the British remembered this and therefore had little sympathy for the Germans when the tables turned.

Yet, this incurred several issues: first, who should pay for these refugees and their subsistence? Second, how would the German authorities react to whatever action and policy the British took? And lastly, where should they accommodate these refugees? As the refugees crossed the borders into the Cape Colony and the Bechuanaland Protectorate, the administration in each took their precautions and established refugee camps. Of course, this incurred expenses and therefore the FO, after a request from the Cape Government, asked the German Government to compensate the expenses of these refugees as they were, after all, German subjects. The Reichstag, however, refused any compensation for African refugees. As German Consul von Jacobs noted:

The motives to render any possible assistance to European refugees from pure humanity as these people have been forced by treacherous and murderous natives to leave the country against their will. These reasons cannot be applied to the fugitive Hottentots and Damaras. After having committed murders and atrocious crimes against the white population in GSWA, English subjects included, these natives have fled into the Cape Colony for the purpose of escaping from well-deserved punishment. The distressed condition in which they may be at the present is only a consequence of their own criminal offences. The Imperial German Government is therefore not able to extend the principles of humanity to these natives in the same way as to European refugees.⁸⁵⁴

Consequently, the Cape Government were to pay for the refugees' subsistence themselves, which prompted a lowering of expenditure and considerations on how to utilise these refugees. In a period from late 1904 to late October 1905, expenditure on the refugee camps was no more than £398, which was probably because assistance was 'only granted to the aged, infirm and children, all able-bodied adults being put to work whenever practicable thus lessening the expenditure as far as possible'.⁸⁵⁵ Because of this insignificant expenditure, Secretary of State Grey considered it 'undesirable' to make representations to the German Government over such a small sum.⁸⁵⁶

In the Cape, an estimated total of 1,275 refugees were interned in camps.⁸⁵⁷ While this figure and that of the expenditure were rather low, the British nonetheless used this issue as leverage in their diplomatic negotiations with Germany. For instance, the Germans were

⁸⁵³ Dederling, 'The Ferreira Raid', 45.

⁸⁵⁴ TNA: FO 64/1646: D.H von Jacobs, German Acting consul-general to British South Africa, to Major-General, E. Smith-Brook, Officer Administering Government, 24 December 1904, enclosure no.G3 in Hutchinson to Lyttelton, 25 February 1905.

⁸⁵⁵ TNA: FO 367/27: Minute by Smartt, 6 December 1905.

⁸⁵⁶ TNA: FO 367/27: FO to CO, Draft, [undated] February 1906.

⁸⁵⁷ TNA: FO 367/27: Note by Frank Lascelles, 2 November 1905.

refused permission to pass supplies through Violsdrift – a border crossing between Southern GSWA and the Cape – because it would be too expensive to establish police posts that would guard against raiding into the Cape Colony, and because the ‘cost of maintenance of refugees still remains unsettled.’⁸⁵⁸ In particular, the Cape Government found it a nuisance to pay for the refugees’ subsistence. Therefore, they continued to pressure Hutchinson to communicate to Whitehall for them to make further requests to the German government. At the end of 1906, the Cape authorities even threatened ‘the possibility of the release of these people together with closing of drifts when supplies in the country are inadequate, that must force the German Government to accede to our just demands.’⁸⁵⁹ To such a hard-line stance towards the Germans, Whitehall responded that they ‘strongly deprecate at present juncture release of interned natives.’⁸⁶⁰

This rupture between the stance of the Cape and Whitehall reveals that in London, the government was fearful of how colonial policy towards refugees would be received in Germany. In other words, their direct concern was the relations with Germany as a whole, whereas the Cape authorities were more concerned by the local situation in which they were not only paying for the subsistence of refugees but were also aggravated by the threat posed by Germany alongside the potential rebellion that could emerge in response to Whitehall’s more pro-German stance on refugees. The difference in interests between metropole and colony remains a central factor in how colonial policy vis-à-vis GSWA played out. Whitehall was caught between two opposing pressures on the matter of refugees: from Germany, which pressed for further co-operation, and from the Cape which pressed for support and demands to be requested by Britain from Germany. A third could perhaps be found in the facet of public opinion and a fourth in international law regarding refugees. All these aspects were, as will be shown, the backdrops against which a rather circumstantial British policy towards GSWA, refugees and border policy was effectuated.

Indeed, it was legally established by British Law Officers that Germany was under no obligation to pay for the refugees and, moreover, since these were not belligerents, the Cape was in no way obligated to ‘intern’ them nor to return them to GSWA, because the rules of neutrality did not apply to non-belligerents.⁸⁶¹ The Germans contested this and continuously claimed that the refugees were indeed belligerents, particularly when they had partaken in the rebellion as armed fighters, as was later the case with Marengo. By Christmas

⁸⁵⁸ TNA: FO 367/27: Hutchinson to Elgin, 4 October 1906.

⁸⁵⁹ TNA: FO 367/27: Hutchinson to Elgin, 24 December 1906.

⁸⁶⁰ TNA: FO 367/27: Elgin to Hutchinson, 28 December 1906.

⁸⁶¹ TNA: FO 367/63: Law Officers to CO, 26 February 1907.

1906, Elgin had already communicated to Hutchinson that the Germans had finally named their price on the maintenance issue and they would agree to pay the expenditure for the refugees if the British agreed to maintain strict surveillance of rebels in their territory for the duration of the conflict. Also, the Cape would do their utmost to prevent ‘any rebels who may remain in British territory after the termination of the rebellion from becoming a source of danger to the German Government.’ Moreover, there were to be no restrictions on the passage of supplies across the frontier and all goods carried between GSWA and the Cape were to be free of duty. Finally, the ferry at Rahman’s drift, which had a special arrangement on delivery of supplies, was to continue.⁸⁶² This was a hefty price for a rather insignificant expenditure.

The decision on the maintenance was, however, never truly solved. This was partially due to the lack of interest in this issue from Whitehall and because of continuous obstacles such as the election in Germany in January 1907, which has been termed the ‘Hottentot Election’ due to the influence of the situation in GSWA, which delayed negotiations for several months.⁸⁶³ Furthermore, as the war was, in the meantime, coming to an end, the Cape felt that it was running short of time: peace would mean that its expenses would not be reimbursed, as it would hold no leverage to negotiate with – Germany would be at peace with the interned and there would be less dependency upon Cape trade. Consequently, the Cape pressured Whitehall consistently but was met with a stonewall of disinterest on the matter, as this had to go through the CO and finally the FO, who both saw no reason to further antagonise Germany over something considered relatively unimportant.⁸⁶⁴

The issue of refugees was marked ‘Case 609’ by the FO. When consulting these extensive source books, what is striking is the fact that there is much attention to issues not directly pertaining to the refugees themselves. The FO was, by far, mostly concerned by the effect that the issue would have on Anglo-German relations, whereas the CO, to an extent, sympathised with the Cape Government which was at the forefront of the direct consequences of the war in GSWA. It is likely, as discussed above, that British collaboration was determined by a diplomatic interest in appeasing Germany. However, it remains clear that there were certain issues where Germany was frustrated by the supposed lack of collaboration from the Cape and the British Government, especially concerning the refugee issue.

⁸⁶² TNA: FO 367/27: Elgin to Hutchinson, 20 December 1906.

⁸⁶³ Ulrich van der Heyden, ‘The hottentot election of 1907’ in Zimmerer and Zeller (eds.), *Genocide in German South-West Africa*, 113.

⁸⁶⁴ TNA: FO 367/63: Minute by Ministers, 4 February 1907 and Elgin to Grey, 8 March 1907.

Belligerents or ‘political refugees’?

The refugee camps set up by the British were barely guarded, prompting the Germans to suspect that the British allowed the Herero and Nama to re-cross the border. Indeed, there was little intention from the side of the British to maintain strict surveillance of both the border and camps, not only because this would incur further expenses but also because they did not consider border-crossings probable due to ‘geographical obstacles.’⁸⁶⁵ Nevertheless, after continuous pressure from the German Government, the FO had the camps moved further inland, still without resolving the maintenance issue, in order to satisfy the Germans and to allay any suspicions of the British allowing border crossings.⁸⁶⁶ Furthermore, the Germans asked the British to report on who was interned in their camps, particularly if there were any chiefs or notable persons – a request with which the British complied.⁸⁶⁷ Thus, Whitehall was willing to comply with certain diplomatic requests from Germany, indicating a collaborative understanding between the colonial powers not only in the colonies but also in Europe. In fact, Grey himself believed that the refugees were belligerents, and as such, Britain was actively obliged to support the Germans by law of neutrality.⁸⁶⁸ While the perception in London, therefore, was that the Cape was too unwilling to lend support to the Germans despite the anxieties that arose from the rebellion, the Cape Government and Governor Hutchinson claimed the opposite. In a telegram to Elgin, Hutchinson argued personally that he did not think ‘the German authorities have any real cause for complaint.’ This was because ‘they have really been afforded every facility by the Cape Government for the prosecution of the campaign, facilities so great as to prove a protest from the Military Intelligence Department at Pretoria.’⁸⁶⁹

Perhaps the most important issue when it came to the classification of the refugees as either belligerents or ‘political refugees’ was that of extradition. The German Government communicated to the Cape – which then communicated to the CO and FO respectively – that they should revise their policy. The Germans took an interesting approach: instead of denying the stance of the refugees as non-belligerents, they appealed to the British that the refugees were ‘merely a big band of robbers and murderers’ and therefore that it would be in ‘the greatest interest of the whole white race in the Southern parts of Africa to deprive

⁸⁶⁵ TNA: FO 367/27: G. Merry, Acting magistrate, Mafeking, 30 December 1905, enclosed in Selborne to Elgin, 19 February 1906. See also TNA: FO 367/27: High Commissioner to Lindequist, 18 February 1906.

⁸⁶⁶ TNA: FO 367/27: Fred Graham, Under Secretary of State, CO to FO, 20 April 1906.

⁸⁶⁷ TNA: FO 367/27: Selborne to Elgin, 19 March 1906.

⁸⁶⁸ TNA: FO 367/27: Minute by Grey, 15 May 1906.

⁸⁶⁹ TNA: FO 367/27: Hutchinson to Elgin, 11 April 1906.

these people of the possibility to escape the pursuit of German troops.’ Furthermore, the Germans reassured the British that if they handed the refugees back to the German authorities, they would be treated fairly. Indeed ‘The proclamations issued by General von Trotha and Herr von Lindequist guarantee to these natives the fairest treatment and that only those who have committed crime shall be punished.’⁸⁷⁰

The issue of extradition is an ambiguous one because it not only caught the British in an internal deadlock between colony and metropole, each responding to their own interests and pressures from either Germany or indigenous populations respectively, but also due to international law. Perhaps the best illustration of how Anglo-German relations pertaining to the extradition issue evolved during the war in GSWA is once again Marengo. In March 1907, the Germans applied to have Marengo, who had been detained at Tokai in Cape Town, extradited. The Germans did not appeal to the juridical aspects, but emphasised the crimes Marengo had allegedly committed against British subjects, which would brand him a criminal and not a ‘political refugee.’⁸⁷¹ In fact, the Germans even pointed out that Marengo’s actions were comparable to ‘those perpetrated by Ferreira and his men.’⁸⁷²

Despite the German attempts, however, Hutchinson was ‘constitutionally bound to refuse’ and the Cape Government also refused to extradite Marengo at this point.⁸⁷³ After his release, the Germans requested the Cape authorities to arrest him once more, but according to Hutchinson, they were ‘unable to issue a warrant for the arrest of Marengo, as I am advised that the evidence in support of the claim for extradition shows that the crimes complained of were of a political nature.’⁸⁷⁴ Once more, metropolitan concerns over how the Germans would react affected the opinions on the matter: ‘Lord Elgin shares Sir E. Grey’s apprehension that the refusal of a warrant for extradition without reference to a court may give rise to a protest on the part of the German Government.’⁸⁷⁵ London, therefore, was not willing to risk a deterioration in relations with Germany over the issue of Marengo, especially when there was no direct juridical decision made from the courts on the matter.

Particularly, the FO was upset over the refusal of the Cape Government:

Sir E. Grey’s opinion the practice of the Government of the Cape Colony in refusing requisitions for extradition by means of acts of the executive in lieu of submitting them to the decision of the ordinary judicial tribunal is open to serious objections and is to be strongly deprecated. The administration of a branch of law so intimately relating to the liberty of the subject by the Executive Government without

⁸⁷⁰ TNA: FO 367/27: Humboldt, Consul-General, Cape to Jameson, 9 May 1906, enclosed in Hutchinson to Elgin, 18 June 1906.

⁸⁷¹ TNA: FO 367/63: Hutchinson to Elgin, 25 May 1907.

⁸⁷² TNA: FO 367/63: Humboldt to Jameson, 2 May 1907, enclosed in Hutchinson to Elgin, 25 May 1907.

⁸⁷³ TNA: FO 367/63: Hutchinson to Elgin, 29 May 1907.

⁸⁷⁴ TNA: FO 367/63: Hutchinson to Elgin, 4 June 1907.

⁸⁷⁵ TNA: FO 367/63: CO to FO, 4 July 1907.

recourse to the Courts seems undesirable on constitutional grounds – Inasmuch as it tends to expose the Colonial Government to adverse foreign criticism, and to misconceptions being placed upon its actions, such a general course seems also to be inexpedient as a matter of policy, even though it may be legally justifiable.⁸⁷⁶

Nevertheless, the FO, based upon the decision of the Extradition Treaty of 1872 between Britain and Germany, claimed that Marengo's actions were political offenses, thus legitimising the actions of the Cape in refusing to extradite him, but informed the Cape authorities that the Secretary of State still had the final word in the decision. Grey believed that extradition cases should be decided by the Courts and not the government. The FO wanted to change this as it had 'already proved a source of considerable embarrassment to the Imperial Government and may on some future occasion involve them in difficulties even greater than those which have attended Marengo's case.' Thus, it was suggested that an Extradition Court should be established in Cape Town.⁸⁷⁷

As shown above, the Marengo case was an ambiguous one: while the British refused his extradition while he was imprisoned at Tokai, it was not until the Germans communicated to London that the British had agreed to monitor his movements and only with the personal intervention of the Kaiser that the British agreed to collaborate in the pursuit. This reveals the political rights of the Africans fleeing from GSWA: while the Cape Authorities were seeking to maintain sovereignty and denying any extradition, London was not. This may be because the Cape faced a rational fear of a potential rising being instigated, with outright collaboration with the Germans, whereas London was more aggrieved by potential diplomatic problems arising with Germany over what they considered a lesser matter. Particularly when the King became personally involved, no one in Whitehall seems to have been interested in opposing a policy of collaboration in the Marengo affair.

Therefore, the protection granted to the refugees was subjected to a hierarchy, not only of ideals, but also of authority. It was used as a legalistic principle upon which Germany had no right to demand further collaboration by the Cape, but it was a principle which was in no way as strong as *realpolitik* and practical interests. Consequently, the British were only willing to protect the refugees as long it did not cause too many practical, diplomatic or political strains – which is only further substantiated by the despicable conditions in which they allowed the refugees to remain.

⁸⁷⁶ TNA: FO 367/63: FO to CO, Draft telegram, 2 August 1907.

⁸⁷⁷ Ibid.

Refugees in British Territory: Camps and Labour

The conditions in the refugee camps reveal many aspects of British official responses and perceptions of the conflict and genocide in GSWA. They not only give indications about Britain's own treatment of the Herero and Nama, but also reveal how wider concerns in both metropole and colony affected policy-making. Indeed, as has already been shown, the minuscule expenditure upon refugees caused the British to take a rather contradictory policy: while they pressed the Germans to compensate, they were well aware that this was both unfeasible and unimportant. Yet they still used it as leverage in their dealings with the Germans in other affairs. Indicatively, when the British had assisted the Germans by killing Marengo, Elgin suggested that it was now the right time to make renewed representation to the German Government regarding repayment of the expenditures on the refugees.⁸⁷⁸ However, the fact that the expenses on the maintenance of the refugees were so small and that this was more a diplomatic matter for the British government than a humanitarian one suggests a lack of interest in the welfare of the refugees. When the funding for the refugee camps was so small and was regarded as such an unimportant issue, particularly in London, it is worth looking into the actual conditions of these camps. The large quantities of sources from the CO and FO in London kept at the archives in Kew are very telling: while these sourcebooks contain literally thousands of letters, reports and telegrams, only a handful of these are concerned with the refugees themselves. This indicates the relative importance of the various matters where the conditions were considered less important than the compensation question.

The conditions of the refugee camps in the Cape were atrocious. It is, however, important to note at this stage that these camps were not comparable to those in GSWA. The intention here, unlike in GSWA, was not to exterminate or subjugate the inmates but to intern them to prevent any problem with either Germans or African communities in British territory. Nevertheless, the conditions of those staying in these camps remained dire and were perhaps comparable to the labour camps in Witwatersrand, rather than the concentration camps in GSWA.⁸⁷⁹ Although these labour camps were also abhorrent places where 'residents' lived in terrible conditions, this was nonetheless what the British and Cape

⁸⁷⁸ TNA: FO 367/63: CO to FO, 19 October 1907.

⁸⁷⁹ Tilman Dederig, 'Compounds Camps, Colonialism', *Journal of Namibian Studies*, 12 (2012), 36.

authorities at the time believed to be sufficient, and although the South African labour camps occasionally came under scrutiny, it rarely became widespread.⁸⁸⁰

In 1907, a new refugee camp was to be established at the French Roman Catholic Mission station at Matjeskloof near the town of Springbokfontein. A total of 590 refugees, of whom only about 20 were men, were sent from camps at Steinkopf and Port Nolloth and were reported to be 'in a wretched condition and a very large proportion are dying from starvation, insufficient clothing and scurvy.' A critical report on this camp further stated that in the previous week, twenty-two refugees had died, 'mostly young women and children.'⁸⁸¹ The report continued:

Government, beyond providing a small ration of bread, fat and sugar, have done absolutely nothing for these people. The Mission, whose resources are limited, have done everything they can to provide nourishment and clothes, and the Cape Copper Company have built a shed for use as a hospital, and provided empty sacks for making shelters.⁸⁸²

The immediate critique, therefore, was aimed at the Cape Government for not looking after the refugees properly. Consequently, many died of starvation and disease. Doctor Cowan, who oversaw the medical affairs, had furthermore 'represented the matter very strongly to the Magistrate, but can get nothing done. He says the people are dying simply from want of sufficient nourishment and clothes and unless more blankets and proper food are provided, this enormous death rate will continue.' Furthermore, it was noted, that during the time when the refugees were at Steinkopf, a timespan of five or six months, over 100 died while the German mission supervised this station.⁸⁸³

Considering the minuscule expenditure on refugees, these conditions are not surprising. Furthermore, when a band of Nama crossed the border with cattle, 'with the intention of selling them and providing the women and children at the Steinkopf camp with money', they were seized and sent to the Cape Copper Company's mines and their cattle returned to GSWA, as they were deemed stolen. It was reported that this, as well as the treatment of the refugees, 'has caused considerable feeling among the Hottentot and Basters of the district.'⁸⁸⁴ The concern that the rebellion in GSWA might spread, therefore, became intertwined with the Cape's treatment of the refugees. Consequently, Hutchinson wasted

⁸⁸⁰ See Warwick, *Black People and the South African War*, 169-74. In addition to describing the conditions of mining labourers, it is shown how conditions after 1902 worsened rather than improved after the British takeover of Transvaal.

⁸⁸¹ TNA: FO 367/27: Report, Military Intelligence Department, enclosed in Hutchinson to Elgin, 30 July 1906, 1.

⁸⁸² *Ibid.*, 1.

⁸⁸³ *Ibid.*, 1-2.

⁸⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 2.

little time in investigating the matter, asking an officer in the vicinity, Colonel Crewe, to look into the report and find out if the number of deaths was correct and particularly if the 'bad feeling caused amongst the natives in British territory' was true.⁸⁸⁵

Crewe sent his comments no later than a day after Hutchinson's requests, which reveals the potential importance of this issue, not only in terms of a potential rising amongst the indigenous peoples but also its political ramifications should they be caught mistreating the refugees. Indeed, Crewe stated that 'I have had some information regarding the condition of the refugees you refer to, and it is not altogether satisfactory', and he therefore promised to make further inquiries.⁸⁸⁶ The local Resident Magistrate, W.T. Magennis, soon returned a detailed report on the refugee camps, in which he refuted any criticism. While he confirmed that the refugee camp had been moved from Steinkopf to Matjeskloof in order for the refugees to 'come under proper care', he was 'surprised to see that it has been stated that a large number are dying from starvation. This statement is untrue; none have died of want of food since their arrival at Matjeskloof or prior thereto.'⁸⁸⁷ Furthermore, he stated that few of the refugees were skilled labourers, and therefore many could only work for low wages – mainly in the mining industry. Nevertheless, he admitted that 'a good number have died, but there is nothing surprising in this' because they died of scurvy. The group of Nama that was captured, he claimed, were working in the mines 'as free men and have their families living with them.' He also claimed that the false accusations in the initial report were the work of traders – especially Jewish traders – who wished to make money out of stolen goods and cattle brought over the border by Nama.⁸⁸⁸

In addition to Magennis' reply, the medical officer at the Matjeskloof camp, J. Cowan, was drawn in to explain. He too downplayed the importance of the situation: 'I said that I had represented the matter (death rate) strongly to the Government through you that if the diet scale now recommended or one like it was not passed then the death rate would be terrible. I did not say I could get nothing done by you.' Moreover, he stated that 'the refugees have not died of insufficient food so much as of improper food.'⁸⁸⁹ It is impossible to know what Magennis told Cowan to persuade him to support him or whether the initial report was indeed untrue. The last opinion on the matter came from a Mr W. Rorick, a Dutch

⁸⁸⁵ TNA: FO 367/27: Major Cameron to Colonel Crewe, 26 July 1906, enclosed in Hutchinson to Elgin, 30 July 1906.

⁸⁸⁶ TNA: FO 367/27: Crewe to Cameron, 27 July 1906, enclosed Hutchinson to Elgin, 30 July 1906.

⁸⁸⁷ TNA: FO 367/27: Report by W.T. Magennis, Resident Magistrate, Namaqualand, 4 August 1906, enclosed in Hutchinson to Elgin, 20 August 1906.

⁸⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁸⁹ TNA: FO 367/27: Report by J. Cowan, Medical Officer, 4 August 1906, enclosed in Hutchinson to Elgin, 20 August 1906.

Reformed Minister who had visited the camp in question to ‘secure for myself and several of my congregation some of the children as servants.’ Having worked with rationing and similar cases in the 1890s, he gave his views on the administration and rationing in the camps: ‘To me it is as plain as daylight that the refugees are overfed, and that our Magistrate deserves to be checked in his extravagance! There are, Sir, the minimum being taken, 200 able-bodied young people and children idling precious time and educated into a lazy mode of life.’⁸⁹⁰ He also alluded to the ‘racial stage’ of the Nama (‘Hottentots’) as the ‘lowest’ in Southern Africa, which, according to him, was why such treatment was ill-advised. Therefore, the refugees were to be employed as labourers in the mines of South Africa so that they would not, as was also stipulated with the Ndebele, fall idle and restless.

Before discussing the issue of labour, it is first important to ascertain what impression the above evidence of the conditions in the refugee camps gave to the officials in Whitehall. Here, limited source material is available, so to get an actual idea of the setup of these camps and what conditions the refugees were in, it would be necessary to explore, in depth, the Cape and Bechuanaland archives in South Africa and Botswana respectively. However, this exact point indicates a crucial issue in understanding how Whitehall and the official mind acted and perceived the events. The limited interference of the metropole may have been due to lack of awareness. Whether intentional or not, the man-on-the-spot created an illusion through contradictory evidence which left Whitehall in the dark but may have satisfied the Cape authorities, who were likely aware of the actual conditions. Whether this illusion was intentional is unclear, but it created a conviction of satisfaction pertaining to ‘native policy’—both in terms of a rising not being on the cards and of the refugees themselves supposedly not starving, which may have prevented Whitehall from intervening. There was no humanitarian pressure aimed against these camps, both because it remained unknown to lobby groups and the press and because it was the Cape Government which was responsible, and except for Hutchinson, Cape politicians were less responsive to metropolitan pressures and attention that would arise out of a potential colonial crisis.

While it is inviting to draw the conclusion that these camps were obscene and atrocious, thereby witnessing the British committing excesses in connection to GSWA too, it would be erroneous to draw such a conclusion due to the lack of source material available. Dederig, for instance, seems to place most trust on the more critical source on the camps.

⁸⁹⁰ TNA: FO 367/27: Report by W.S.E Rorick, Dutch Reformed Minister, 8 August 1906, enclosed in Hutchinson to Elgin, 20 August 1906.

Furthermore, he includes a source from Germany where it is claimed that 200 out of 600 refugees had died of scurvy by October 1906.⁸⁹¹ This may be correct but it is important to underline its uncertainty, particularly when consulting German source material, as the Germans' knowledge of British refugee camps may only have been limited. Yet, what can be concluded from these sources is that Whitehall only paid the issue reluctant attention when it suddenly appeared before them; but as there was little humanitarian pressure to have them involved and since the information they received was limited as well as contradictory, they did not have the knowledge to act. Furthermore, there was no incentive to inquire further into the affair, except for personal humanitarian persuasions.

Nevertheless, the conditions of the refugee camps certainly invite comparison to the concentration camps in GSWA. According to Zimmerer, the genocide committed in the camps in GSWA was not 'industrial' like the Holocaust, but was 'murder by deliberate neglect.'⁸⁹² Such definition, while correct, is problematic, as it implies that the refugee camps in British territory too could be categorised similarly to those of GSWA. The Cape administration and the British government definitely neglected the refugees, as shown both by the reports on their conditions and by the minuscule expenditure upon these refugees. It is therefore inviting to conclude that these refugee camps were merely an extension of the camps in GSWA. But one crucial difference remained evident; whereas the Germans had the *intention* to oppress and exterminate their prisoners, no such intention existed in the case of the refugee camps in British territory. As Dederling has shown, the security in the refugee camps in British territory was lax, with no barbed wire and few guards, and the internees could generally move around. Indeed, they were 'more like rallying posts where refugees were supposed to eke out a living and stay away from the war.'⁸⁹³ This was much unlike the camps in GSWA, where barbed wire, natural boundaries and guard posts forced the Herero and Nama to remain in their desperate conditions against their will. Moreover, the fact that the bridge to Shark Island was guarded by a machine gun shows that the Germans saw it as imperative that the prisoners remained where they were.⁸⁹⁴ While the British too were guilty of neglect, there was no outright policy or desire to keep the prisoners in their terrible state.

Nevertheless, the prevalent fears amongst British officials that the treatment of the refugees would cause resentment among their own subjects were countered by the premonition that the refugees would cause a stir among their own colonial subjects due to

⁸⁹¹ Dederling, 'War and Mobility', 287.

⁸⁹² Zimmerer, 'War, Concentration Camps and Genocide', 60.

⁸⁹³ Dederling, 'War and Mobility', 287.

⁸⁹⁴ Kreienbaum, "'Vernichtungslager' in Deutsch-Südwestafrika", 1018.

lack of land, cattle and waterholes – a point which was made by the APS.⁸⁹⁵ Officials in South Africa agreed with this view:

The location of these persons in any part of our Protectorate will necessitate an increase in our Police Force, if only to prevent their stock straying across the Reserve boundaries, and interferences with our natives' waters, which would at once cause serious unrest and trouble amongst our own tribes.⁸⁹⁶

It was therefore considered problematic to simply allow the refugees to settle in British territory either permanently or for the duration of the war in GSWA. Furthermore, according to Mervyn Williams,⁸⁹⁷ the influx of refugees would 'produce the greatest disturbance and uneasiness' among other tribes who had already seen their territory 'been brought within narrow limits by the successive concessions to Germany' and 'threatened with incalculable injury at the hands of worthless savages from beyond their borders, who, having never practiced the cultivation of soil, must, in order to support life, destroy their game and otherwise interfere greatly with the peaceful avocations of the inhabitants.'⁸⁹⁸

This not only displays the resentment among Cape officials towards the German presence in the region, but also shows a hostile attitude towards the mobility of Africans across colonial borders. Indeed, there was a clear sentiment of hostility towards the refugees, because it was believed by many that they were, after all, the ones who had started the rebellion. Therefore, according to Williams, inviting in the refugees – or rather, criminals as he called them – would potentially cause a rebellion much like that in GSWA to occur in British territory.⁸⁹⁹ Panzera opposed Williams' view and claimed that he was only afraid because it would 'put off the time when the Protectorate will become a white man's country.' Instead Panzera advocated that although the complete disarmament of refugees was impossible, they could nonetheless prove to be a crucial source of manpower on farms and mines throughout British Southern Africa.⁹⁰⁰

There is little doubt that the labour question was one of the most crucial in British policy in Southern Africa – both in the Cape Colony, the Transvaal and, as shown, in Southern

⁸⁹⁵ BL: P.P.1019: The Aborigines' Protection Society, 'The Aborigines' Friend' (December, 1904), 229.

⁸⁹⁶ TNA: FO 64/1645: Panzera to Milner, 7 October 1904, enclosed in Milner to Lyttelton, 17 October 1904, 1.

⁸⁹⁷ Mervyn Williams' role is somewhat uncertain. He is not to be confused with Ralph Williams, the Magistrate in the Tsau district, but there seem to be a widespread lack of clarity regarding his position and origins, see, for instance, Gewald, *Herero Heroes*, 180, ff.211.

⁸⁹⁸ TNA: FO 64/1645: Mervyn Williams to Panzera, 30 September 1904, enclosed in Panzera to Milner, 3 November 1904, 5.

⁸⁹⁹ TNA: FO 64/1645: Panzera to Milner, 3 November 1904, 6-7.

⁹⁰⁰ TNA: FO 64/1645: Panzera to Milner, 7 October 1904, enclosed in Milner to Lyttelton, 17 October 1904, 2.

Rhodesia at the time. For instance, Hutchinson reminisced in 1911 that the African populations were an almost ‘inexhaustible’ source of labour, which was important as ‘white men were not willing to do Kaffirs’ work.’⁹⁰¹ Therefore, the refugees coming into British territory were soon absorbed by the existing labour networks, sending streams of African – and later Chinese and Indian – labourers to the horrific conditions of the mining camps.⁹⁰² The influx of refugees soon found their way to the mines and farms still recovering from the recent war.⁹⁰³ Furthermore, the appalling conditions of the refugee camps may have furthered the Herero and Nama incitement to move further into British territory and seek employ.⁹⁰⁴

Yet, the issue of the refugees coming into British territory was not only a matter of possible antagonism for the British indigenous subjects and a potential source of labour. It was also a matter of rights. For instance, when a large group of Damara who had crossed over wanted to remain in British territory – more precisely, the Batawana Reserve – they were instructed that ‘the British Government recognise no chieftainship of any Damara in the Protectorate, but simply regarded them headmen for convenience of administration.’ Therefore, it was recommended to the High Commissioner that they could remain if they ‘submitted to the tribal control exercised by the Chief recognised by the government and that they obeyed the orders of the British Government and its officers.’⁹⁰⁵ In Bechuanaland, this saw the Tawana chief, Segkoma, permit the Herero refugees to settle in the Sehitwe and Nokaneng districts and soon they were gradually integrated into society, given work and were assisted in rebuilding and sustaining a livelihood.⁹⁰⁶ This may certainly have pleased British officials, but it also reveals that African communities were inclined to help protect the refugees from potentially being sent back to GSWA.

From the British perspective, however, if a local chief would recognise the refugees as subjects, any potential motive for rebellion had been removed. Of course, the process was more complicated than that, and in the case of the Herero in the Tawana community, they

⁹⁰¹ Hutchinson, ‘South Africa’, 122.

⁹⁰² See Dederer, ‘Compounds’, 29. Also Gewalt, *Herero Heroes*, 179-181. The issue of Asian labour migration in the British Empire and especially to South Africa cannot be dealt with in depth here. But see, for instance, Rachel Bright, ‘Asian migration and the British World, c. 1850-c.1914’ in Kent Fedorowich and Andrew Thompson *Empire, Migration and Identity in the British World* (Manchester, 2013).

⁹⁰³ TNA: FO 64/1645: Panzera to Milner, 7 October 1904, enclosed in Milner to Lyttelton, 17 October 1904.

⁹⁰⁴ TNA: CO 417/442: Selborne to Elgin, 28 January 1907. For description of the refugee camps see Dederer, ‘War and Mobility’, 286-88. Also, Peter Curson, *Border Conflicts in a German African Colony- Jakob Morenga and the untold Tragedy of Edward Presgrave* (Bury St. Edmunds, 2012), 136-37. For the emigration to the Rand see Jan-Bart Gewalt, ‘The Road of a Man Called Loved and the Sack of Sero: Herero-German War and the Export of Herero Labour to the South African Rand’, *Journal of African Studies*, 40, 1 (1999).

⁹⁰⁵ TNA: FO 367/27: Ralph Williams to Selborne, 24 June 1906, enclosed in Selborne to Elgin, 13 August 1906.

⁹⁰⁶ Renee Pennington and Henry Harpending, ‘How Many Refugees were there? History and Population change among the Herero and Mbanderu of Botswana’, *Botswana Notes and Records*, 23 (1991), 209-210. See also F. R. Vivelo, ‘The Entry of the Herero into Botswana’, *Botswana Notes and Records*, 8 (1976), 39-40.

participated in an internal strife over succession where they supported Sekgoma.⁹⁰⁷ Therefore, the influx of refugees into African communities in British territory also had social and cultural ramifications, as it could disrupt hierarchies and relations. Nevertheless, it was deemed better than sending this rather large group of between 500 and 600 able-bodied men back to GSWA, because that would 'have a bad effect with the natives generally in the Protectorate' and because this 'would cause us to be identified with German methods of native rule.'⁹⁰⁸ Selborne agreed to this – Britain should not be connected to the German excesses, which proves that they were aware of the affairs in GSWA and even considered them excessive at the time. However, Selborne, seemingly determined to find some benefit from the influx of refugees, felt compelled to reply that 'they understand, I presume, that they will have to pay hut-tax?''⁹⁰⁹

The refugee issue was therefore key in understanding the policies and actions of the British vis-à-vis the war in GSWA. It forced them to take a direct and active stance and it meant that the war crossed borders in many forms such as in loot, anxieties and, of course, people. The British sought to maintain complete sovereignty over their borders but soon found themselves in an uncomfortable situation where they had to walk on eggshells to avoid provoking the refugees, the Germans and the indigenous peoples in British territory.

According to Drechsler, after the Heligoland-Zanzibar Treaty in 1890 between Britain and Germany, the 'dominant feature' in their relationship in Africa was 'co-operation in holding down Africans.'⁹¹⁰ Likewise, Ulrike Lindner's argument of a colonial project comes to mind. Yet, while Britain did co-operate, their overall stance when including their refugee and border policy, was ambiguous and often contradictory. It was far more directed by circumstantial and extant considerations, rather than by an idea of a shared 'project'. It was chaotic, contradictory and inefficient; it was a sign of weakness from the British both in London and South Africa. Britain was a weak colonial state, which was anxious about the slightest possibilities of the conflict spreading across the border or having the slightest effect on the peace with both Boers and indigenous subjects, not to mention diplomatic relations with Germany. Therefore, it sought to enforce, or at least portray, complete sovereignty as

⁹⁰⁷ See Jan-Bart Gewald, "I was Afraid of Samuel, Therefore I Came to Sekgoma": Herero Refugees and Patronage Politics in Ngamiland, Bechuanaland Protectorate, 1890–1914', *The Journal of African History*, 43, 2 (2002).

⁹⁰⁸ TNA: FO 367/27: Ralph Williams to Selborne, 24 June 1906, enclosed in Selborne to Elgin, 13 August 1906.

⁹⁰⁹ TNA: FO 367/27: Selborne to Ralph Williams, 13 August 1906, enclosed in Selborne to Elgin, 13 August 1906.

⁹¹⁰ Drechsler, *Let us Die Fighting*, 138.

much as possible in the borderlands, thus attempting to show strength and a friendly stance to both the Germans and the Herero and Nama at the same time.

Conclusion

Germany, being a 'new coloniser', was perhaps swayed by a more rigid strand of racial theories than was Britain, which had, for centuries, governed colonies and indigenous peoples and was keen to wash out the old sins of slavery. This rigid perception of race and the rejection of Darwinism as *Affenlehre* may have been influential in how colonial policies were formulated in GSWA, thereby sustaining a rationale behind the atrocious treatment of the Herero and Nama, who were dehumanised. While this suggests a certain German exceptionalism vis-à-vis the *Sonderweg*, it is worth highlighting the role of the British neighbour. Indeed, what occurred in GSWA was not a result of ideologies of *Lebensraum* and racism alone as it occurred within an entangled context in which Britain played a pivotal part, not only in inspiring the concentration and death camps but also through its actions and policies towards Germans and Africans alike. In other words, the war and genocide in GSWA was part of a broader trans-colonial context rather than a reductive extension of German national history to its former colonies.

When the Blue Book portrayed Germany as an exceptionally cruel coloniser in 1918, it foreshadowed the *Sonderweg* perception of German colonialism. The position of Britain in the Blue Book was thus portrayed as that of a bystander, not directly participating and being unaware or, at best, knowing very little of the atrocities that unfolded across the border, at least not until the invasion in 1915.⁹¹¹ However, in 1904-8 Britain was, as has been shown, aware and even complicit in the affairs that unfolded in GSWA. The Blue Book is therefore representative of a selective memory where any indication of British awareness or co-operation was subdued so that a British, or indeed South African, takeover would appear to be a benevolent intervention on part of the Herero and Nama.⁹¹²

But it was not only in terms of awareness and collaboration that Britain was entangled into the conflict. Besides trade and other interactions, GSWA was also a place where up to half of the white population was non-German. British and especially Boers made up the other half, thus questioning the demographic commitment of the colony to Germany. This and other entanglements such as the dependency on Cape imports meant that GSWA was

⁹¹¹ Administrator's Office, 'Report on the Natives', 9.

⁹¹² Bomholt Nielsen, 'Selective Memory', 320.

formally a German colony, but perhaps informally a British, or rather, a Cape dominated area. Therefore, the British and Cape entanglements into GSWA complicated German ambitions and were an outright threat to perceived German hegemony. Indeed, although Whitehall had allowed Germany to seize SWA, in the Cape it continued to be considered part of the future South African Federation (or Union as it came to be). Thus, this schism between metropole and colony pertaining to a neighbouring German colony influenced the ways in which the British Empire collaborated (or opted not to) and perceived German colonial rule and violence. Indeed, in a report from 1909, German colonial policies and the atrocities that had ensued were seen as problematic in how Britain acted in the region because it was deemed that German policy ‘drew the British along in their difficulties and they endeavour to impress the native mind that there is no difference between Germans and Englishmen.’⁹¹³ Thus, the conflation of German and British colonial policies was also a source of concern in Whitehall, as it would ‘gradually eat away our authority amongst our own native subjects.’⁹¹⁴ From the perspective of Whitehall, it was a matter of assisting – or not assisting – a fellow European coloniser and making sure it did not disrupt the relations with Germany nor South Africa. But for the Cape authorities, it was a question of not only sovereignty but also ideology. Whereas the power balance in Europe at the time was relatively even, this was not the case in Southern Africa, where the Cape was profoundly superior in terms of political, economic and military strength, to mention but a few. Hence the arrival of an increasing number of German soldiers in GSWA may have been feared to be an attempt by Germany to balance this difference. However, most importantly, the Cape, at this time solidifying itself after the South African war and gearing up towards the establishment of the Union of South Africa, sought to ratify its own sovereignty both towards its immediate border with GSWA and also towards the British imperial government in London.

The fact that SWA was considered by many to be part of the forthcoming union in all but reality and that London had disappointed in allowing Germany to have it, may have caused further deviation within the British Empire. As Selborne informed his sister, Sophia Palmer, in a personal letter, the decision of the British government to allow Germany to acquire colonies was a ‘grave mistake.’

The result has been to add very seriously to our Imperial political difficulties, e.g. the German footing in South Africa is the real cause of our troubles with the Transvaal... And what has been the result to the

⁹¹³ TNA: FO 367/136: Intelligence Report by Captain H.S.P. Simon, 6 March 1909, enclosed in Hutchinson to The Secretary of State for the Colonies, The Earl of Crewe, [undated], 2.

⁹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 3-4.

natives? Instead of the splendidly just Imperial rule of England, e.g. Basutoland and Bechuanaland, there is the brutal (a just word) rule of French and German officials...⁹¹⁵

Thus, British perceptions of the Herero-Nama war and the subsequent genocide were subjected to an internal, often implicit, struggle between the various imperial and sub-imperial actors. Just as Southern Rhodesia was to be secured by restraining the BSAC after 1896, so too was GSWA part of the same imperial outlook. Indeed, the perception of Southern Africa in imperial terms was one where the German presence was important to address and the conflict and genocide in GSWA only disrupted the supposed stability of British South Africa and could potentially bring about various spill-over effects.

The perceptions and actions of British officials pertaining to the war and genocide in GSWA were influenced by the degree of collaboration – or lack thereof – with Germany in colonial matters. During the Herero-Nama war, Anglo-German relations such as the 1905 Morocco Crisis unfolded, changing foreign relations between Germany and Britain. Consequently, the rising antagonism would suggest that the British stance during the Herero-Nama war was influenced as such: i.e. that it was shaped by antagonism rather than collaboration, as the Zanzibar-Heligoland treaty would envisage. This is partially true because the British, while being anxious about a potential German invasion or a German-backed Boer rising, were still willing to lend a hand to their German neighbours in a spirit of ‘friendly neutrality.’ Hence, it was not a clear case of Britain seeking to undermine Germany, but instead a case where British fears of a spill-over effect directed their actions and policies.

The claim made by Lindner that Britain and Germany prior to the First World War were engaged in a ‘colonial project’ echoes earlier arguments by Fröhlich and Drechsler, who both emphasised the racial attributes to such collaboration, which Lindner notes was not restricted to Southern Africa, but was a common interest for all colonisers. For Germany and Britain, however, it was the ‘sharing of the white man’s burden.’⁹¹⁶ As Christopher Clark observes, the tightening of the Anglo-French alliance at Algeiras in 1906, did indeed mean that Britain was less interested in maintaining good relations with Germany. Only in cases of ‘crisis on the imperial periphery’ was this of interest, although it never amounted to a full alliance.⁹¹⁷ Therefore, as Daniel Grimshaw has emphasised, Britain and Germany’s ‘imperial

⁹¹⁵ Selborne to Sophia Palmer, 17 May 1898, in Boyce, *The Crisis of British Power*, 61-62.

⁹¹⁶ Ulrike Lindner, ‘Colonialism as a European Project in Africa before 1914? British and German concepts of Colonial Rule in Sub-Saharan Africa’, *Comparativ*, 19, 1 (2009), 106.

⁹¹⁷ Christopher Clark, *The Sleepwalkers. How Europe Went to War in 1914* (London, 2012), 144.

projects were similar, creating secure economic benefits in their colonies' and the rebellions in GSWA made the whole region unstable, thus causing a shared interest in ending it.⁹¹⁸

However, although the idea of a shared colonial project is useful, it is important to understand the complicated and often contradictory premises upon which British officials acted and perceived German colonial rule. Britain remained a 'friendly neutral' officially, but simultaneously supported the Germans in many incidents such as supplying arms and resources and assisting in military operations, particularly in southern GSWA.⁹¹⁹ Yet, co-operation was always subtle and ad hoc, for there was never a clear directive force, nor clearly stated instructions which British officials (or colonial officers) could follow. Furthermore, there is no archival evidence for any policy or directive aimed towards GSWA, whether indicating a shared project with Germany or seeking to undermine them by supporting the Herero and Nama. A 'project' is therefore perhaps too neat a term to describe this complicated web of stakes, interests and motivations, particularly since British officials are here shown to act haphazardly in accordance to the constantly changing situation. It is therefore important that the notion of rivalry is not simply replaced by one of co-operation, for colonial powers were collaborators and rivals at the same time. Certainly, the aspect of co-operation must and should be further promoted, but the anxieties, fears and outright refusals to assist colonial rivals were equally characteristic of both British and German colonialism. Instead, in the case of GSWA, the relations between Britain and Germany can perhaps best be characterised as a mutual understanding to preserve stability in the face of African rebellions which arose spontaneously, but not in a deliberate and explicit manner that would indicate a shared project. Furthermore, the perspective of British officials on the genocidal horrors in GSWA was not exogenously aimed but rather emanated from internal anxieties and interests. Thus, Britain did not collaborate to help Germany, but mostly did so on occasions when it was deemed necessary for selfish interests and to prevent any potential spill-over, which could, for instance, be in the shape of a new Boer rebellion or an African uprising emerging in British territory.

Suggestions of colonial projects and racial solidarity are neat ways to bring order to the past to make it more comprehensible. The problem is that this marginalises the historical context and the chaos of the past. German colonial rule in GSWA was weak, and so was Britain in South Africa after the recent war. The former's weakness was in due to its

⁹¹⁸ Daniel Grimshaw, 'Britain's Response to the Herero and Nama Genocide, 1904-07. A Realist Perspective on Britain's Assistance to Germany during the Genocide in German South-West Africa', (MA Thesis, Uppsala University, 2014), 60.

⁹¹⁹ Lindner, 'Encounters over the Border', 15. Also Lindner, *Koloniale Begegnungen*, 239.

incapability to attain hegemony and its limited numbers to adequately rule the vast and environmentally difficult colony of GSWA. The latter was weak in its internal political struggle between British and Boers and the imperial policy of South Africa moving towards a union. There was little indication of a 'project' when approached from the British perspective, but only an understanding pertaining to the stability of the fragile borderlands. Therefore, the weakness of the German administration had a direct impact on the actions and views of the British: it was a threat that could cross the borders where German colonial weakness could expose British colonial weakness.

But these imperial and geopolitical stakes represent only one side of the coin. The other was the relative ignoring of German colonial violence and misrule. Despite being in possession of unmistakable evidence, the public outcry for action that persisted in the Congo crisis was here non-existent, leaving the perceptions of the detailed reports on the excesses to be mainly official. It remains striking that many of the same issues from post-war Southern Rhodesia re-emerged in GSWA, particularly the issue of forced labour and vengeance. The rebellion in Southern Rhodesia had more white casualties than that in GSWA, where neither women nor children were spared. In GSWA, only German men were killed, yet it was in GSWA, not Rhodesia, that the death camps were established. This beckons two conclusions: one is that German colonialism was, as much of the literature has suggested, exceptional and much more brutal than its contemporary counterparts. Another conclusion is that the rules of colonial wars had changed with the South African War. Before 1899 a peace settlement was the aim and the notion of total war was limited. Of course, civilian casualties were neither incomprehensible nor un-strategic, but they largely remained outside the direct strategy and, most importantly, the intent of the war. After the South African War, however, it was the destruction of a nation, if not through war, then through systematic extermination and subjugation by establishing camps and, for some, subjugating them to a slave-like working class.

In conclusion, British officials' perception of German colonial rule and violence was interwoven into a complicated web of shared interests, a general desire for stability and the changing, often contradictory relations with Germany both in Europe and in Southern Africa. The brutal conduct by Germany was well-known and at times lamented by officials, but still attained occasional support against rebels. Humanitarian concerns and reports of these details were then suppressed, as they could interfere with the more important realpolitik, foreign policy and imperial interests. Unlike the humanist lamentations as voiced in the Blue Book, the contemporary view was one of hard-line realism that sought to safeguard British South Africa's stability and to avoid antagonising the Germans, Africans

and Boers in the process. Consequently, British perceptions of German colonial rule during the Herero-Nama war can perhaps best be characterised as ambiguous and even contradictory, as they both collaborated and refused to collaborate. They were interested in ending the conflict, supporting the Germans for diplomatic reasons, but were also aware that any conflation with German colonialism was problematic and did not necessarily adhere to colonial interests. It was a state of paranoia and a desire to reach stability on a regional scale which was chaotic, yet collaborative and well-aware of the atrocities that unfolded. The place of the Africans herein was paradoxical: on one hand their treatment was fundamental, albeit secondary to geopolitical interests, imperial legitimacy and maintaining a diplomatic equilibrium in Europe. On the other hand, any concern for the Africans was not immediately focused on the Africans themselves, but rather upon the excesses of colonial administration. In other words, it was not their welfare that was at heart at such concerns, but the ramifications of the excesses of European colonial administration.

Conclusion

In the autumn of 2016, in the wake of the Bundestags' recognition of the Armenian genocide committed by the Ottoman Empire in 1915, Turkish officials responded angrily by pointing to Germany's own dark and unrecognised past. They not only pointed to the darkest chapter in German history, the Holocaust, but also to the supposedly forgotten genocide in Namibia. German politicians have since initiated negotiations with the Namibian state over an official recognition, although refusing to open the matter of reparations.⁹²⁰ Similar developments have not materialised pertaining to Southern Rhodesia, perhaps because of its unique process of decolonisation through the independence announced by Ian Smith in 1965, or since any addressing of the past seems unlikely due to the current political misgivings surrounding Zimbabwe under the recently deposed Robert Mugabe. Nevertheless, as late as January 2017, both the Herero and the Nama decided to sue the German state for its actions against their ancestors in 1904-8 at the US District Court in New York.⁹²¹ It is not the intention here to discuss the details of current proceedings pertaining to either Britain's or Germany's colonial past, but they showcase the importance of understanding these events and reveal the scars left by colonial rule and violence. More importantly, Turkey's response by pointing to German colonial excesses reveals that even to this day, colonial violence and misrule can be utilised as a tool of diplomacy just as the British did in 1918.

The Blue Book of 1918 served as an effective means to justify Britain and her allies' takeover of GSWA. Despite its clear subjectivity and clear agenda, it is nonetheless an important source to the study of how colonial violence was revisited after the First World War. The German White Book responded to it in the same manner and pointed to British colonial excesses too. The Blue Book and White Book invite comparison of the two cases above as incidents of colonial excesses wherein racism and oppression were the norm. Therefore, before moving on to conclude on how British officials understood each case of colonial misrule and violence in the context of the underpinning ideologies and their imperial ambitions, it is first important to characterise the nature of Anglo-German colonial rule by highlighting the structural similarities of these two cases.

Naturally, there were several parallels between the two cases, but there also remain crucial dissimilarities. For instance, the murder of women and children in Southern Rhodesia

⁹²⁰ See <http://www.dw.com/de/deutschland-und-namibia-viel-zu-kl%C3%A4ren/a-36558761> (accessed 16 May 2017).

⁹²¹ See <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-38530594> (Last accessed 12 November 2017).

was not repeated to the same extent by the Herero and Nama in GSWA. However, the response of the colonial power was also different and indicates a relatively dissimilar understanding of how colonial risings were to be countered. Indeed, the response of the British in 1896 was fundamentally different from that of the Germans in 1904, as it was only the latter who pursued outright genocidal strategies. Nevertheless, the White Book's referral to the 1896 rebellion as an example of British colonial excesses is vindicated by a variety of clear parallels that may furthermore explain how British officials understood, perceived and reacted to such situations. In terms of similarities, three main aspects can be identified: (i) the military operations and the violence inflicted upon the Africans; (ii) in both cases, the issue of 'native labour' was crucial for colonial policies and the general ambitions for each colony and; (iii) both cases also displayed the weakness of the colonial states in Southern Africa.

Although the scale of violence in Southern Rhodesia and GSWA was, as mentioned, different, the similarities in the military operations and the violence inflicted remain instructive. It is worth noting that the two most fundamental publications on each case, by Ranger and Drechsler respectively, both categorise each rebellion as a united African response to European encroachment. In both cases, the Ndebele and Herero seized the chance to rebel when the colonial forces were engaged elsewhere. Both had the initiative, but failed to sustain their offensive and were forced into a long defensive war when imperial troops arrived. Only when the Africans used guerrilla tactics were the overwhelming superiority of Britain and Germany challenged, with measures of dynamiting caves and concentration camps being introduced in response. Of course, it is, worth noting here that in 1896, the concentration camps had not yet been introduced fully as a means of colonial warfare, whereas in GSWA, the British example of the South African War a few years beforehand may certainly, as has already been discussed, have been a grim inspiration for the Germans. As Lindner has argued, the usage of different means imposed by colonial powers in counter-insurgency efforts entered into what she calls a 'colonial archive' from which the colonial powers could transfer practices and draw upon the experiences and methods of others.⁹²² These violent practices, which reveal the underlying racism of colonial rule and violence, were gradually radicalised by the success of African guerrilla resistance. Indeed, in the opening stages of the conflict, both British and German troops applied the strategy of 'mowing down' African rebels. The 'tools of empire' not only created a power gap in material terms, but also created a psychology where the mere presence of a machine gun was believed

⁹²² Lindner, 'Colonialism as a European Project', 104-6.

to be enough to scare off the rebels. Racialism, having created an image of European racial superiority, was thereby reinforced through this technological gap because it upheld that exact image.⁹²³ Therefore, when challenged by guerrilla warfare, the colonisers sought to maintain their self-portrayed superiority by employing violent methods of dynamiting caves and concentration camps.

Regarding the aspect of 'native labour', John Wellington argues that one of the critical comparative elements between Southern Rhodesia and GSWA was the post-conflict state of each colony, which was characterised by the aspiration to maintain a racial gap or hierarchy.⁹²⁴ The issue of 'native labour' was critical to maintain this gap to achieve the future economic development. Both British and German officials applied a similar rhetoric when it came to the use of forced labour drawn from the Africans. For instance, Milner argued in a similar way to his German counterparts Hartmann and Rohrbach that labour schemes would not only be economically beneficial but would also help to civilise the alleged savages. However, a central problem emerged where the labour-demanding projects – for instance, the mining industry of Southern Rhodesia and the construction of the Lüderitz harbour – prompted a large influx of forced labour permitted under the guise of 'public works'. The problem that arose from this was, as Milner had warned, that it could lead to 'false accusations of slavery.'⁹²⁵

This presented British officials with a problem since, the entire moral identity of the British Empire after 1833 was to rid the world of the slave trade and slavery. Furthermore, international treaties had clearly stated that it was the duty of the colonisers to oversee the welfare of the Africans and these 'new slaveries' would undoubtedly be in violation hereof, whether within the confines of the British Empire or as a well-documented practice in a neighbouring colony. In Southern Rhodesia, Whitehall intervened and made sure that any labour provisions were omitted on paper, and although such practices continued, this nonetheless indicates that humanitarian principles were indeed taken seriously. However, when forced labour was uncovered in GSWA, the British government did not have a direct responsibility nor a desire to intervene: at least, not until the outbreak of the First World War.

The third comparative element between the cases is the underlying weakness of the colonial powers not just in Southern Rhodesia and GSWA but in the entire region. Aldwin Roes, in a study of the Congo Free State, identified four central factors that determined the strength and reach of a colonial power. First was the armed resistance against colonial rule.

⁹²³ Hyam, *Britain's Imperial Century*, 307.

⁹²⁴ Wellington, *South-West Africa*, 252.

⁹²⁵ Cooper, 'Conditions analogous to Slavery', 130-33.

Second was the geographical obstacles and the size of the colonial space. Third was the thinly spread administrative and military posts which stretched colonial authority. Fourth was the economic aspect where the colonial ventures often ended in disappointment due to overestimations of mineral wealth and a weak financial base.⁹²⁶ These four aspects neatly fit the situation in both Southern Rhodesia and GSWA and indicate that colonial rule in both was generally weak. The risings caused immense problems for the colonial administration and incurred several political and economic costs. The geography was also a key feature in each case study, as exemplified by the Ndebele resistance in the Matopos or the use of the border and rugged terrain, especially by Nama guerrilla fighters. Furthermore, in Southern Rhodesia, the newly conquered Matabeleland was thinly occupied and GSWA was sparsely populated with settlers. The financial situation of each was also problematic, as both had proven to be costly in maintenance, with limited prospects for the future.

The weakness of the coloniser in both Southern Rhodesia and GSWA, therefore, presented the British imperial authorities in Whitehall with a problem as they became deeply involved in the conflicts of the surrounding area where the risings Southern Rhodesia and GSWA formed strong possibilities that could undermine British rule through various scenarios or spill-over effects. Therefore, to secure the hinterland of the prized, yet fragile South Africa, British intervention in one way or another sought to mitigate the weakness displayed by the BSAC and Germany. In regard to the former, it resulted in the deployment of imperial troops, and for the latter, it resulted in various incidents of collaboration with Germany, especially on the borderlands. According to Dederling, these borderlands formulated a critical space for resistance that caused different problems and concerns for officials, because these were the weakest areas, since they were 'diffuse areas where hegemony is fragmented through the imperial rivalry between different colonial powers, through the ineffective control mechanisms of the colonial state, and through the precarious environmental conditions.'⁹²⁷

Colonial rule in Anglo-German Southern Africa was therefore weak and the colonisers were constantly seeking to achieve domination and hegemony.⁹²⁸ This fundamental weakness prompted the colonial powers to use excessive force, especially when the weakness of the colonial state was displayed by, for instance, guerrilla resistance. In addition to the lack of hegemony in the colonies themselves, the entire region was also

⁹²⁶ Aldwin Roes, 'Towards a History of Mass Violence in the Etat Indépendant du Congo, 1885-1906', *South African Historical Journal*, 62, 4 (2010), 637-38.

⁹²⁷ Dederling, 'War and Mobility', 276.

⁹²⁸ Saul Dubow, 'The New Age of Imperialism: British and South African Perspectives' in Mary N. Harris and Csaba Lévai (eds.), *Europe and its Empires* (Pisa, 2008), 11.

affected by the Anglo-Boer relations, either in terms of the increasing aggressions leading up to the war or the ongoing attempt to stabilise the region afterwards. The context in which British officials understood colonial crises in the region, therefore, were entangled into the broader realpolitik situation where their presence was considered fragile and always challenged by Africans, Boers or Germans. Clearly, therefore, the overall strategic and imperial goal from the perspective of Whitehall before 1914 was the overall stability of the region. The weakness of colonial rule and the constant effort to obtain hegemony therefore prompted further collaboration between the British imperial government and the BSAC and Germany respectively. An important aspect in this thesis has been to understand the relations between the British government and the two secondary actors, and here a similar pattern has been revealed. Just as had been the case with their relations with Germany, the British government and the BSAC were simultaneously accomplices and rivals. They had shared goals and interests but were in constant competition, as the Company sought to further its autonomy and economic growth and the government saw Southern Rhodesia as part of their broader view of empire in Southern Africa, where company actions could affect or disrupt imperial policies and agendas, particularly concerning the Boer republics.

The prevailing notion of rivalry as being characteristic of Anglo-German colonialism in Southern Africa is partly a product of the post-war descriptions in the White, and especially the Blue Book. Their antagonistic and disjointed narratives have confirmed the idea that Britain and Germany were engaged in a spirit of antagonism, obscuring connections and cases of co-operation. Indeed, the longstanding perception of the pre-war years has arguably been shaped by the spirit of the post-war years, but as John Mackenzie and others have shown, ‘imperial co-operation flourished before 1914, then it stopped.’⁹²⁹ The problem here is that we are left with two disconnected entities of absolutist nature: either colonial powers co-operated as friends or they were rivals. However, both are too definitive and do not consider the premises upon which colonial actors operated.

British officials in both case studies are shown to have an ambiguous and often contradictory stance towards either the BSAC or Germany. They co-operated when it suited British interests and when it was the easiest solution. But concomitantly, they also knew that co-operation could, for instance, cause grievances amongst their colonial subjects or could undermine British imperial legitimacy. In 1918 both the moral and legal arguments presented in the Blue Book were based on the Africans’ own alleged desire to be under British rule.

⁹²⁹ John Mackenzie, ‘European Imperialism: A Zone of Co-operation rather than Competition?’ in Barth and Cvetkovski (eds.), *Imperial Co-Operation and Transfer*, 48.

Regarding Southern Rhodesia, the existence of a coercive labour scheme would not only bring to the fore a colonial scandal, but would also exhibit the British Empire as being in direct violation of its most crucial moral component of anti-slavery and humanitarianism. Therefore, the relations between Whitehall and the BSAC and Germany respectively, were characterised by an inherent ambiguity that encompassed several stakes, interests and convictions. Co-operation could then also pose a problem for Britain, as it indicated their awareness and participation in affairs that could be publicly lamented. Therefore, co-operation was haphazard and not always given, either out of fear of its ramifications or because it would not suit British interests. Yet, in the face of 'native risings', the desire to achieve stability remained at the top of the agenda and thus prompted a shared interest among the colonial actors.

Certainly, recent arguments that the British, or for that matter other empires, were 'trans-European projects' remain compelling and allow us to transcend nationally deduced histories of colonialism.⁹³⁰ But it remains imperative to remember the ambiguous and often contradictory nature of the relations between the colonial actors. Indeed, the nature of both intra- and inter-colonial relations may perhaps best be described by the old Bedouin proverb, 'me against my brother, me and my brother against my cousin, me, my brother and my cousin against the stranger.'

The place of the Africans, however, remained central, as they were not only a potential threat to the much-desired stability, but were also the victims of colonial maladministration which could, in turn, also destabilise the region, either by antagonising further upheaval or by spawning metropolitan critique and pressure. The treatment of Africans, therefore, was a key issue in these conflicts, as maladministration and exploitation could undermine both the moral and the legal premise of colonial rule.

Although the officials in Whitehall and beyond often saw the Africans as being inferior, there remains little evidence of an outright linkage between scientific racialism as a metropolitan discourse and officials' perceptions of colonialism. Where the theme of racism is central in this thesis is mainly in the implementation of practices such as establishing concentration camps, dynamiting caves and, as in both cases, introducing systems of forced labour. This is not to say that officials did not hold racist persuasions, but rather, that these did not carry through to their work in the same way as more political ideologies of humanitarianism. Racialism, while rarely expressed explicitly, was therefore a basic principal

⁹³⁰ Drayton, 'Trans-European Collaboration', 38.

conceptualisation upon which colonial rule and colonialism were effectuated. The subjects – the ‘lower’ races – were instrumental in the imperial project and crucial to the understanding thereof. Racialism thus allowed for violence and oppression, but it also invited complexities and juxtapositions such as the sensitive labour issues where racist ideas of labour being ‘healthy’ for the Africans were at odds with the humanitarian anti-slavery ideology. Moreover, military practices were observed by, among others, media and foreign officials, and therefore officials, whether British or German, remained sensitive to how they were perceived by their counterparts and peers, particularly when the Congo crisis was unfolding.⁹³¹

The racism witnessed, both in the warfare employed and the labour policies, remains characteristic of Anglo-German colonialism before the outbreak of the First World War. But whereas the British government intervened in Southern Rhodesia to curb company rule, they remained passive upon uncovering similar and even worse incidents in GSWA and at times even helped the Germans. There is, therefore, a discrepancy between the two cases, where Britain in one case acted and in the other upheld a colonial *omerta*. However, in 1918, the nature of colonial rule was of course revisited in the Blue and White Books respectively, thus beckoning the question of what underpinning factors, interests and circumstances might have triggered this change from accepting the grim reality of colonial rule to denouncing it.

The British government’s stance towards the BSAC offers a pre-war glimpse into how colonial scandals were interwoven into both humanitarian convictions and imperial policies and interests. It was not only revisited by the White Book but also shows that Germany in 1918 ostensibly took the same place that the BSAC had once held, being on trial. Indeed, where Rhodes and his associates had been held accountable for the Jameson Raid and maladministration, Germany was now proposed to be the main culprit behind a new colonial scandal. In other words, Britain sought purposefully to establish Germany as a new Rhodes, or rather, as a new Leopold. For British officials, the empire was embedded in a morality in which humanitarianism, originating from the anti-slavery movements, was a fundamental factor and justification behind expansion. Both company rule in Southern Rhodesia and the British response to the violence in GSWA highlighted the contradictory morality of empire: that violence and oppression went hand in hand with the alleged humanitarian ideals of civilisation and that emancipation was imposed through subjugation.⁹³²

⁹³¹ Cooper, ‘Conditions analogous to Slavery’, 129-30.

⁹³² Michael Barnett, *Empire of Humanity: A History of Humanitarian Intervention* (Ithaca NY, 2011), 11-12.

Throughout the thesis, the humanitarian influence upon British officials has been evident, and it formulated strong and powerful practicalities such as the omission of the clause permitting the BSAC to obtain labour for public works. Although such humanitarian ideology of anti-slavery did indeed prevent colonial rule from possibly taking much worse forms, we cannot completely disconnect racism from humanitarianism, as they often went hand in hand, and both created an image of the colonised as inferior and in need of help. But the question that remained was in what ways to 'help': through actual humanitarian 'civilising' or through racially deduced stereotypes allowing exploitation to exist under the predicate of 'upliftment'. Indeed, humanitarian critique, especially from the outlook of British officials, was focused more on the excesses of colonial rule, rather than on the sufferings of the colonised. In other words, what was at stake was not primarily the lives and experiences of Africans, but the problems that would arise should colonial rule in Southern Africa be too violent and oppressive. Humanitarian critique and convictions, therefore, were mainly aimed at the colonial rulers rather than the colonised. The humanitarianism expressed by officials aimed to ensure that the moral foundations of empire were not disrupted so that it would remain a benign force in the minds of its public. In other words, the anti-slavery rhetoric was not to prevent new slaveries in Africa, but primarily to prevent colonisers from being perceived as such.

The best example to illustrate the immense consequences of what would happen if accusations of slavery were indeed made on a solid empirical basis with the potential for public support, was, of course, the Congo crisis. The massive public protests and support for the CRM compelled the British government to amend its foreign policy accordingly. Colonial scandals could, in the minds of British officials, open a Pandora's box that could lead to dismissals and public denunciations and even compel the government to change its foreign policy regardless of whether this was in its diplomatic interests. Therefore, upon uncovering similar incidents in GSWA, British officials subdued these reports, and fortunately for them, neither humanitarian groups nor the press caught on to the atrocities which could potentially mobilise public pressure to mount a diplomatic mission towards Germany. In the case of Southern Rhodesia, which occurred prior to the full escalation of the CRM, we can already see how the government was keen to ensure that any critique and ramifications could not be traced back to Whitehall. By making sure that the BSAC was not allowed to pursue 'new slaveries' on paper, the government could then and in future always point to the Order in Council and thus legalistically be exonerated. But in 1918, Britain and Germany both referred to these cases of colonial scandals as part of their diplomatic arguments made at Versailles. This, of course, leaves the question of how we may characterise

the discrepancy in British officials' perception of colonial rule in 1918 compared to that pre-1914.

Before 1914, colonial violence and oppression was the norm in Anglo-German Southern Africa. If colonial rule was to remain stable and attain Britain's support, the disclosure of reports on violence, exploitation and genocide – all serving as evidence of the racism that characterised colonialism in Anglo-German Southern Africa – was harmful, and Britain therefore upheld a colonial *omerta* where the atrocities of colonial powers were withheld. Emanating from the ambiguous mutual understanding and collaboration between the colonisers, this *omerta* was upheld to secure the stable and efficient governance of colonial rule in the face of African resistance whether within or outside British formal territory. The logic and applicability of this *omerta* was multiple and formed a double-edged sword: First, it was upheld because of the anxieties and concerns of officials both domestically and internationally. It remains clear, that from the perspective of Whitehall, colonial antagonism was not in their interest, as they were focused on Europe and mainly feared the ramifications that colonial affairs would have for the more important European relations, especially with Germany.⁹³³ Domestically, public opinion, as had arisen during the Congo crisis, was unwanted, as it put the government in a delicate situation where it had to mediate between public desires on the one hand and realpolitik and foreign policy concerns on the other. Withholding information about scandals in the spirit of this *omerta* was therefore key for officials to prevent public outrages that could severely interfere with their realpolitik and imperial interests.

Second, the *omerta* was not only a force that sparked anxiety among officials, but also one which could be harnessed to attain specific aims. This was the case to a lesser extent in 1896-7 when the BSAC was denounced for its maladministration, which led the government to put a leash on the Company, and to a larger extent in 1918, when the Blue Book disclosed German colonial atrocities to gain diplomatic and public support for seizing the entire German colonial empire. It was not merely diplomatic and humanitarian support that could be obtained: as has already been shown by Andrew Porter, popular support could also be mobilised for specific purposes. When Chamberlain and Milner sought to obtain popular support for their belligerent stance towards the Boer republics prior to 1899, a strong body of pro-empire opinion in the metropole would 'enable the Government to achieve its aims through a truly national show of determination...these were the assumptions which led

⁹³³ Louis, 'Great Britain and German Expansion', 20.

Chamberlain to try to use the force of public opinion as a counter in the diplomatic game.⁹³⁴ In other words, public opinion could be a mandate for diplomatic and imperialistic action, including war, and just as it could potentially compel the government to take steps against its wishes and interests, so too could it be mobilised by the government to achieve its goals.

But if certain actors wished to mobilise public opinion for such purposes, the circumstances needed to be right. Before the First World War, *realpolitik* circumstances dictated that Britain should uphold its colonial *omerta* with Germany, as colonial scandals would only harm relations for no purpose and could pose a hindrance to seeking colonial stability, as often done through collaboration. For example, Foreign Secretary Edward Grey, who had been a vocal supporter of the CRM, noted on a report from 1909 which described the genocide in GSWA in detail that it was ‘as bad as the Congo.’⁹³⁵ But another note on the same report simply stated that it was ‘not necessary to send this report to Berlin.’⁹³⁶ In 1909, British officials were therefore well aware of the genocide in GSWA but chose to keep it to themselves, not even transmitting it to Berlin. The logic behind this was that Britain should not interfere with France or Germany on the issue of colonial rule in the same vein as had been done with Belgium because they were, in the words of E. A. W. Clarke, Head of the African Department in the FO, ‘reasonably civilised’ and ‘boys too big to interfere with.’⁹³⁷

The *omerta* meant that British post-war actions were in conflict with both perceptions and actions when the conflicts or scandals were unfolding. Indeed, as shown above the British government was well aware of the conditions and atrocities in both Southern Rhodesia and GSWA, and even participated in the counterinsurgency when they deemed it necessary to achieve stability. But breaking the *omerta* could also be a powerful manoeuvre to obtain public and diplomatic support. However, this manoeuvre necessitated that this intervention be legitimate. Martin’s report therefore served to illustrate the necessity of further imperial control in Southern Rhodesia and restraint of the BSAC. Similarly, the Blue Book, by purposefully exhibiting German maladministration while obscuring British awareness and participation, broke the *omerta* and paved the way for the takeover of Germany’s colonies under the guise of humanitarian intervention.

⁹³⁴ Andrew Porter, *Origins of the South African War. Joseph Chamberlain and the Diplomacy of Imperialism, 1895-99* (Manchester, 1980), 259.

⁹³⁵ Louis, ‘Great Britain and German Expansion’, 34.

⁹³⁶ TNA: FO 367/136: Intelligence Report by Captain H.S.P. Simon, 6 March 1909, enclosed in Hutchinson to the Secretary of State for the Colonies, The Earl of Crewe, [undated].

⁹³⁷ TNA: FO 367/5: Minute by FO Head of African Department, E.A.W Clarke, 21 December 1906. Also cited in Louis, ‘Great Britain and German Expansion’, 38.

This thesis has revealed the complex interactions between the British government and sub-imperial actors and fellow colonial powers, as being indicative of a mutual understanding where the subjugation of African resistance was crucial and saw rivalry and co-operation co-existing. But it has also shown the underlying ideological framework and convictions of British officials in the face of colonial misrule and violence. Indeed, the circulation of reports on misrule and violence was managed by British officials to suit their needs. The result of the ambiguous, yet intimate relations between the government and the BSAC and Germany respectively was the *omerta*. Upholding it or breaking it shows that British officials effectively utilised the circumstances at the given time to suit their needs. It was broken to display the BSAC and Germany as unfit colonisers, paving the way for the extension of British governmental influence or even takeover by its dominion. Humanitarianism was the underlying factor in the *omerta*, as it formulated strong moral and legal validations of colonial rule and violence. This thesis has therefore shown, that diplomatic actions taken in the wake of a *realpolitik* shift intersected with humanitarian discourses that the official mind had hitherto sought to avoid, but could now harness for its own ends. Indeed, both Southern Rhodesia and GSWA, where overt incidents and practices of racism were widespread, could initially become an embarrassment or scandal that could potentially escalate into a new Congo crisis, the consequences of which would be difficult for British officials to anticipate. By upholding the colonial *omerta*, however, such scandals were prevented and managed. But when a suitable scapegoat could be exposed while exonerating British governmental involvement, such scandals posed a tempting and viable opportunity for Whitehall to further their diplomatic and imperialistic interests.

Humanitarianism was therefore far more than a structural ideology proclaimed by various groups and individuals. It was not a passive force that only indirectly shaped the mind of imperial rule: rather, it was an active force which translated into strategies and tactics of colonial rule and imperialistic expansion at the expense of other colonial actors in the shape of humanitarian intervention. In other words, humanitarianism partook in attaining the strategic and *realpolitik* aims of the British Empire and mobilised public, political and diplomatic support, outmanoeuvring both the BSAC and Germany. The former escaped this manoeuvre, albeit restrained by the leash of legislation, which limited its powers and privileges. The latter, however, lost its colonies completely, and to this day, Germany's colonial legacy is still shaped by the image painted by Britain in 1918.

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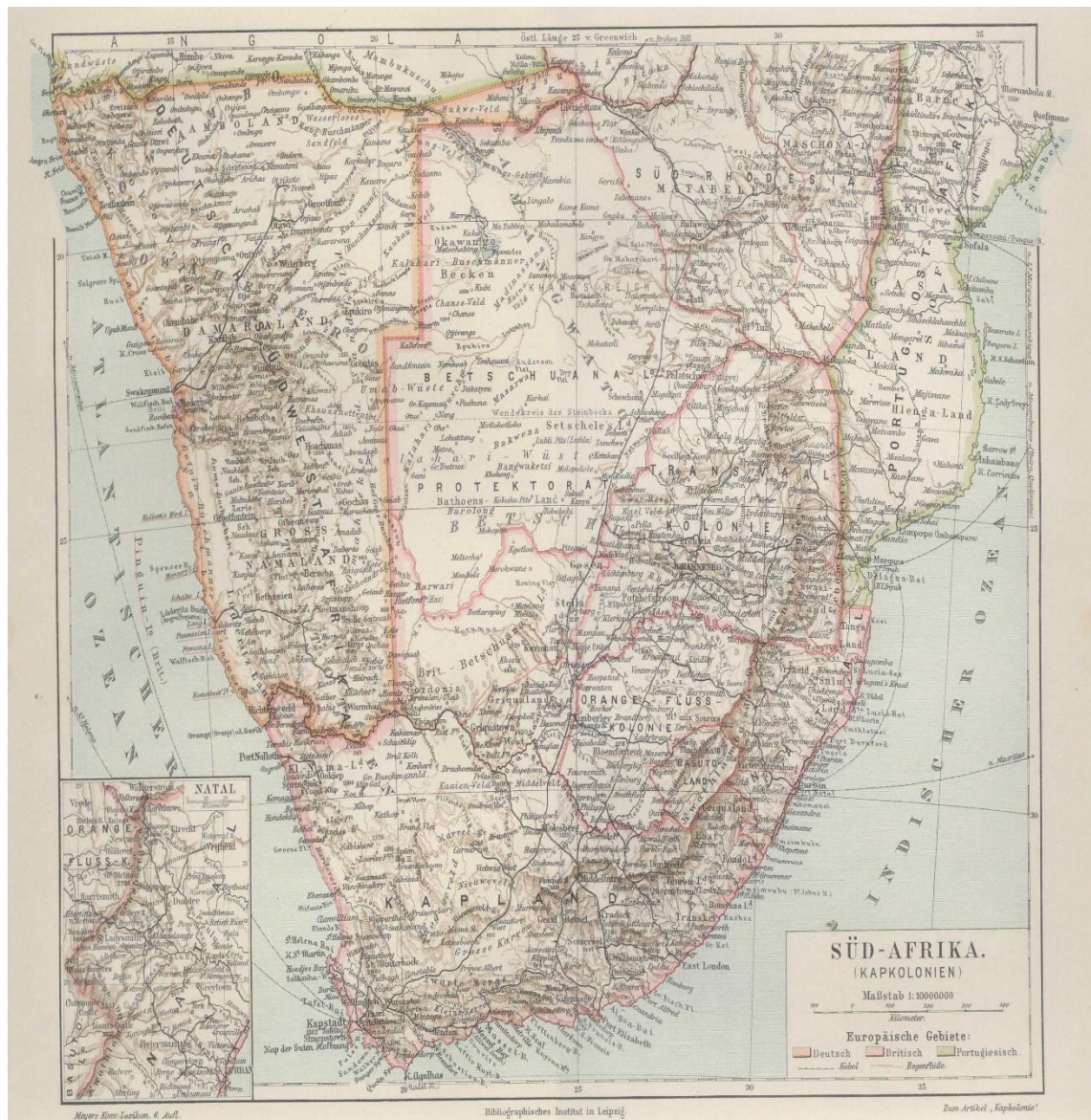
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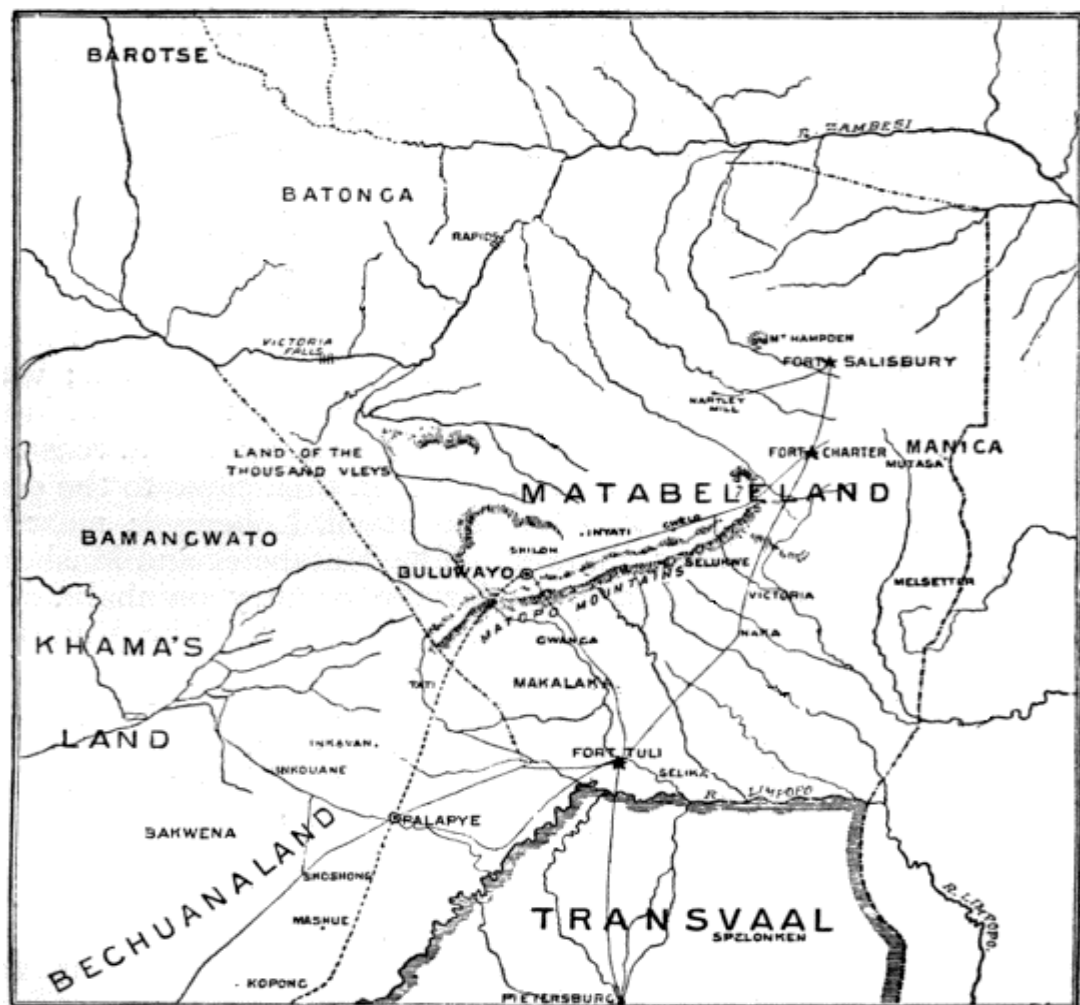
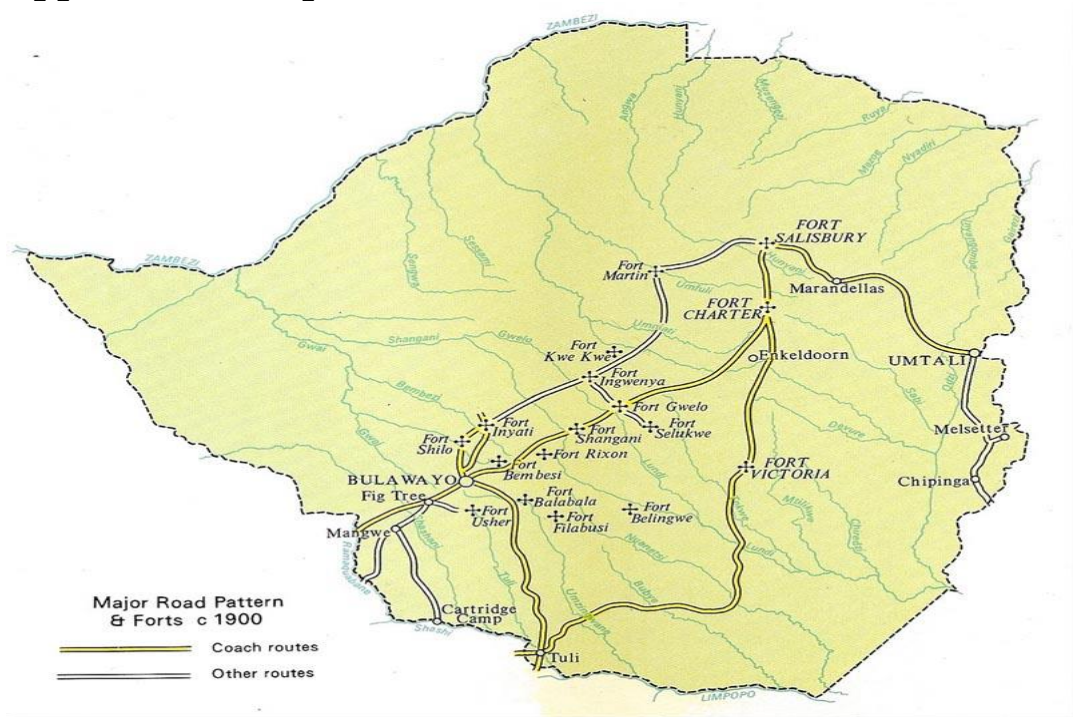
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Appendix A: Map of Southern Africa



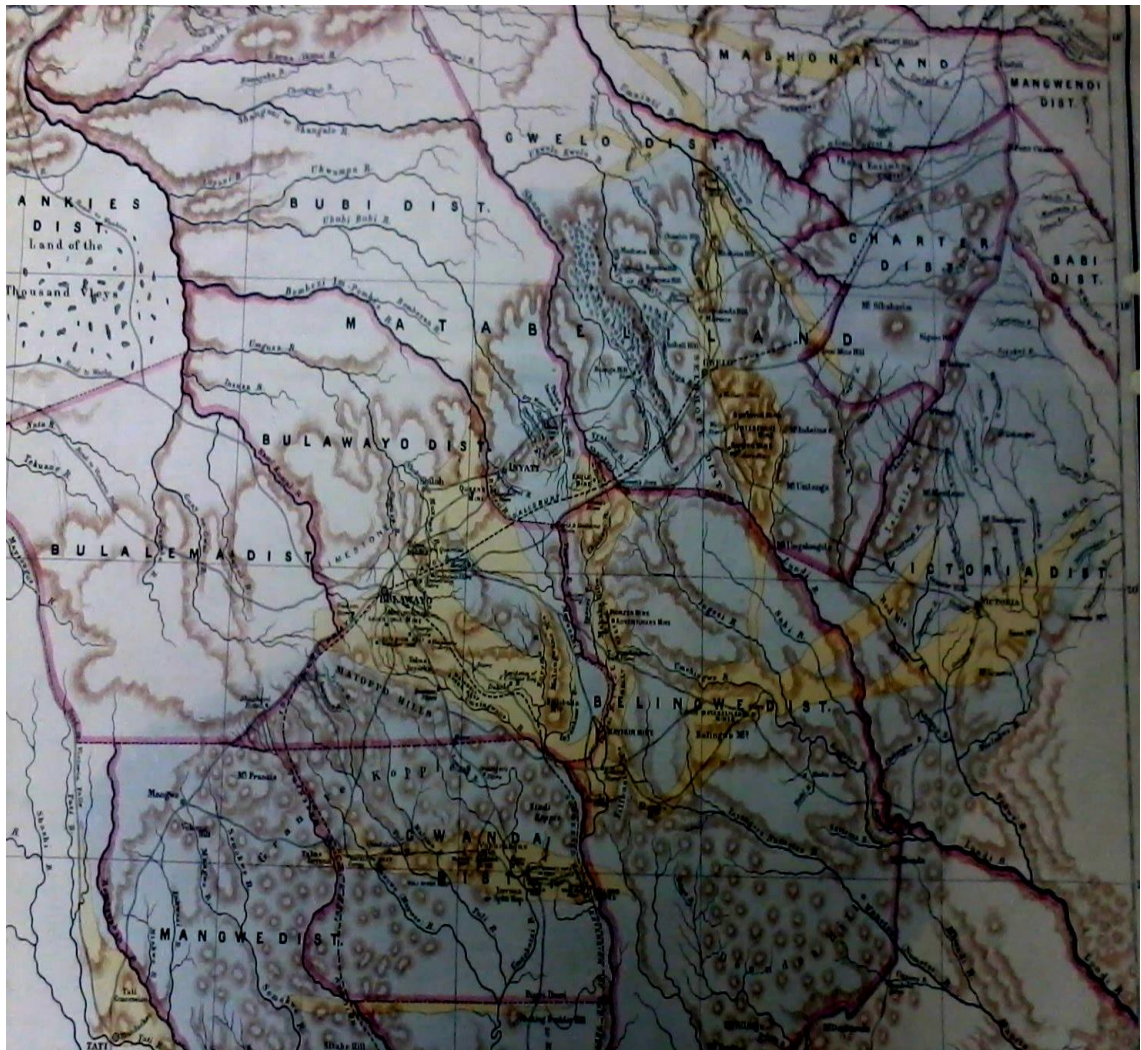
Source: http://schotanus.us/maps/1902_South_Africa_Colony.jpg

Appendix B: Maps of Southern Rhodesia



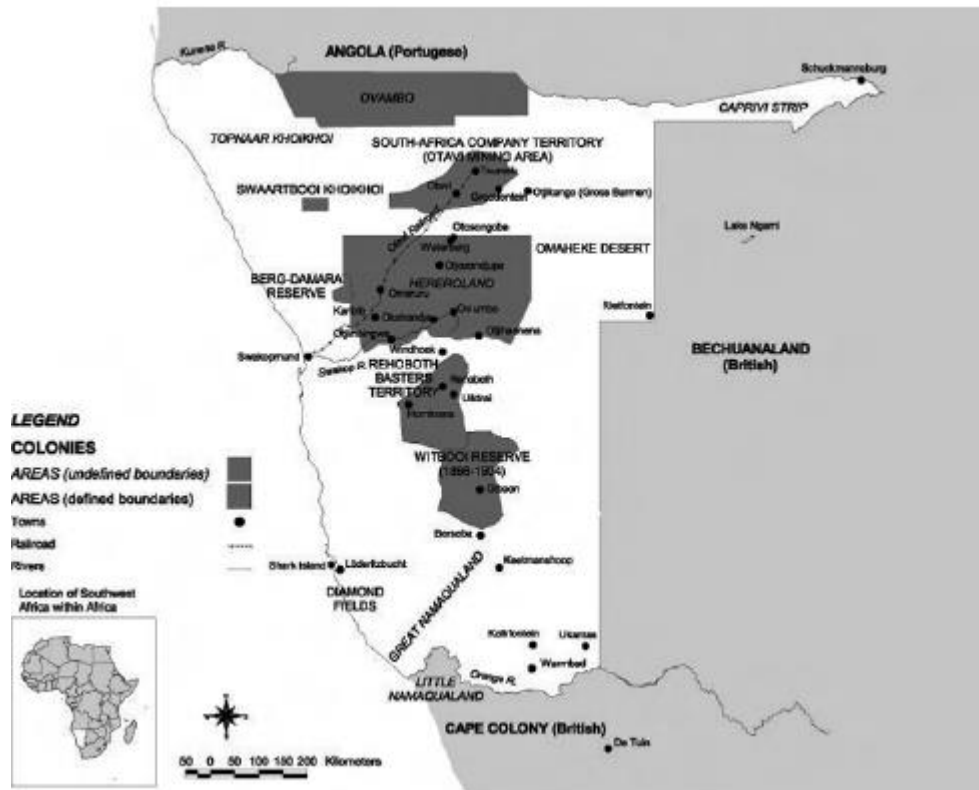
Source: http://www.africafederation.net/Matabeleland_Map.png

Appendix C: Map Supposed Mineral Wealth in Matabeleland



Source: TNA: CO 700/Rhodesia and Central Africa no.19: Economic Geological Map of Matabeleland. By Wm. W. Van Ness, M.E. 1 inch to 12 miles. Yellow marking indicates supposed gold deposits.

Appendix D: Map of GSWA Indicating Locations of Indigenous Communities.



Map of GSWA in 1904-8 by Rob Haug. See George Steinmetz and Julia Hell, 'Visual Archive of Colonialism: Germany and Namibia' in *Public Culture*, 18, 1 (2006), 160.

Appendix E: Overview of Dramatis Personæ and their office(s)

Louis Botha	Prime Minister of the Transvaal, 1907-1910 and Prime Minister of the Union of South Africa, 1910-1919.
Joseph Chamberlain	Secretary of State for the Colonies, 1895-1903.
Lord Elgin (9th Earl of Elgin)	Secretary of State for the Colonies, 1905-1908.
Henry Fox Bourne	Secretary of the APS 1889-1909.
General Goodenough	Commander-in-Chief of the Cape, 1894-1898.
Earl Albert Grey	Administrator to Southern Rhodesia 1896-1897.
Edward Grey	Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, 1905-1916.
Walter Hely-Hutchinson	Governor of the Cape Colony, 1901-10 and Acting High Commissioner, 1909.
Lord Lansdowne	Secretary of State for War, 1895-1900 and Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, 1900-1905.
Frank Lascelles	British Ambassador to Germany, 1895-1908.
Theodor Leutwein	Administrator of GSWA and Commander of the Schutztruppe, 1894-1904. Governor from 1898-1904.
Friedrich von Lindequist	General Consul to the Cape Colony, 1902-1905, Governor of GSWA 1905-1907.
Alfred Lyttelton	Secretary of State for the Colonies 1903-1905.
Sir Richard Martin	Colonel and Deputy Commissioner to South Africa and tasked to compile report on the BSAC's administration of Southern Rhodesia.
Alfred Milner	High Commissioner to South Africa, 1897-1905 and Secretary of State for War, 1918-1919.
Cecil Rhodes	Chairman of the BSAC, Prime Minister of the Cape Colony, 1890-1896.
Hercules Robinson, from 1896, Lord Rosmead	High Commissioner to South Africa, 1895-97.
Earl of Selborne	High Commissioner to South Africa, 1905-1910.
Jan Smuts	General during South African War, 1899-1902 and the First World War. Participant at the Versailles Peace Conference and Prime Minister of South Africa 1919-1924.
Lothar von Trotha	Commander of the Schutztruppe and de-facto Governor of GSWA, 1904-1905.